

A BAPTIST MANUAL



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A Baptist manual

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THE POLITY OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES AND
OF THE DENOMINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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PREFACE

WE are in a most interesting stage in the development of our denominational polity. We are discovering to the joy of all that our pure democracy is compatible with organized effectiveness in every sphere where we need advanced movement. Most important modifications are taking place, and a new denominational consciousness is evident.

It is perhaps too early to write the history of this movement. But it is not too early to indicate the point to which we have come. All Baptist manuals are of necessity out of date. We have felt for some time in our Department of Practical Theology at the University of Chicago the need of a book in which the conditions as they now exist among us would be clearly set forth. Perhaps the special pressure occasioned by divinity lectures may be the excuse for my undertaking to perform this task.

In conference with my friend, Dr. William E. Barton, an acknowledged authority on ecclesiastical usage in the Congregational body, I found that he

had in hand the preparation of a manual for his own denomination. The Congregationalists have been passing through a development very similar to our own, so that I was glad to avail myself of Doctor Barton's generous offer to allow me to consult his work while in course of preparation.

Pres. H. P. Judson, of the University of Chicago; Dr. B. A. Greene, my colleague in practical theology; and Mr. J. S. Dickerson, editor of "The Standard," all of whom have had no small part in recent denominational developments, have kindly read the manuscript and favored me with valuable suggestions.

THEODORE GERALD SOARES.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, January 1, 1911.

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Part I

Baptist Theory and Practice

CHAPTER I

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF BAPTIST POLITY

THE most fundamental principle of Baptist polity, and that upon which all else rests, is that the individual church is an independent body. If it so happened that there were only one Baptist church in the world it could be completely a Baptist church. The Baptists have always believed that this was the essential constitution of the New Testament churches. Further, it seems to be the principle of government most naturally suited to a democratic people, and in spite of the seemingly greater efficiency which more highly organized bodies present, the history of the Baptists appears abundantly to vindicate the value of the democratic principle.

And yet from the very first churches have not existed in isolation. They have naturally felt a relation, which was more than that of mere fraternal interest, with others of like faith and order. The Baptist churches of a locality have been accustomed to send messengers to an Association. This body was never conceived of as a delegated body to have authority over the churches. It was simply, as the name implied, an association of individuals

for the purpose of considering matters of mutual interest to all the churches.

Yet in a way, without in the least compromising independence, the Association inevitably modified it. A church might be a regular Baptist church without affiliation with any Association, but its recognition among the sisterhood of churches depended upon that affiliation. The messengers who were sent by the churches to the Association might be regarded as individuals responsible only to themselves, and yet inevitably they were delegates. And the Association in practice became a gathering of the churches for the consideration of mutual interests, for undertaking general missionary operations within the territory of the Association, and for expressing to some extent at least the common religious sense of the churches.

A very much more significant modification of the principle of independence, which, however, still does not in anywise impair it, is caused by the formation of the larger missionary organizations. The State Conventions in the beginning were not conceived of as delegated bodies. They too were organizations composed of individuals responsible only to themselves. The action of a State Convention could have no binding power whatever upon a church. The State Convention was organized primarily for carrying on missionary work in the needy sections of the State. But that very condition involved the formation of missionary churches, which

would not be self-supporting. It is a principle that has been of universal application, and from which escape is impossible, that the body that pays the bills largely controls the policy. An absolutely independent church supported by an outside organization would be a contradiction in idea. The State Conventions have succeeded admirably in a simple modification of the principle of independence. The humblest little church supported by State finances has always been accorded the privilege of calling its own pastor. That pastor, however, is a missionary of the State Convention. He is appointed by the State Board. As pastor, he is responsible only to his own church. As a missionary, he is responsible to the Board of the Convention.

A similar plan of organization has been worked out in City Mission Societies. The pastors of the churches that are helped by a society are missionaries appointed by the Board of Directors, and acting under the Superintendent of City Missions. The same thing is true of the missionaries of the Home Mission Society. In this way in our entire system of missionary work in America we have been able to leave the independence of the local church untouched in all matters of discipline, plans of work, statements of creed, conditions of membership, etc.; but our missionary organizations have held the right to concur in the call of a pastor, and to determine whether he shall continue as their appointed missionary. It is clear that this involves a certain

reasonable modification of absolute independence.

In foreign missions the modification is still more significant. It is a most interesting fact that among very primitive people the establishment of local independent churches has been of great educational value. Democracy has been justified of her children. People have developed under the responsibility placed upon them for the management of their own affairs. And yet, of course, there has been a very definite oversight on the part of the missionaries. They have indeed exerted a kind of apostolic guardianship of the infant churches. The relation of the missionary to a number of unified churches, of none of which he was a member, has been in many respects quite similar to that which Paul maintained toward the churches he established. That mixture of paternal authority and fraternal counsel, which Paul's wisdom and love enabled him so beautifully to develop, has been reproduced on scores of mission fields in foreign lands.

These various modifications, if such they may be called, of absolute independence have been at work since the beginning of our history. There have always been those who thought that independence was only compatible with isolation. The great movement of the denomination has been in the direction of realizing independence in association. The modifications of the extreme principle of independence have come almost entirely in connec-

tion with missionary work. It is not that there has been a disposition to exercise control over the churches, but there has been the necessity of care and guardianship over churches which had not yet come to maturity.

Through these missionary operations there has come to be a denominational consciousness. This denominational consciousness is so evident that it is doubtful whether any body of Christians has a clearer right to be considered a denomination than the Baptists. The denominational spirit has expressed itself finally in great national Conventions. There are two¹ of these in the United States essentially national in spirit, but necessarily sectional in membership. They are delegated bodies. The delegates are appointed primarily for the purpose of representing the churches in the missionary operations that are common, but these delegated bodies are so manifestly representative of the churches that they have come, in a certain sense, to speak for the denomination as a whole.

It may be said, then, that the fundamental principle of the independence of the local church has been found in operation to be thoroughly compatible with delegated organizations of a district, State, and national character. These delegated bodies have never authority over any church. They have the authority of determining those operations which

¹ Not to speak of the great Negro Convention, which might well claim special consideration.

are common to all the churches, and they have the authority which belongs to their representative character of speaking, in general, the sense of the denomination as a whole.

Baptists have always insisted upon an independence that went very much farther than that of the local church. They have stood strongly for the independence of the individual. They have insisted that the right of the individual conscience must stand against any body. Baptists have sometimes formulated their views in doctrinal statements for the purpose of expressing clearly their common creed. Those statements have never been regarded as authoritative. No statement, however ancient or honored, could ever be made the ground for the acceptance or rejection of a Baptist church by an Association or a Convention. Many a Baptist church has no statement of creed of any kind as its basis of organization. The common consent that the members of the church accepted in general the views commonly believed to be held by the denomination has been sufficient to bind them together. It has been our glory that no legalistic interpretation of creedal statute was ever necessary to determine the status of a member of a Baptist church. We have commonly believed that the unity that has so markedly characterized our denomination has been to no small extent a result of this general agreement, and this freedom from creedal restraint. It is probably true to-day that no body of Chris-

tians is characterized by such substantial agreement of religious views as the Baptist body. And yet it has been achieved without heresy trials, without authoritative creedal formularies, without any organized safeguards. And the development of our denominational faith and our denominational unity will come through this same democratic principle of soul liberty.

Careful observers of the movement of events in the denomination can see a trend in our polity toward closer denominational affiliation and more effective organization. Our fundamental principles of liberty are so secure that we are not so fearful of organization as in earlier days. Other denominations have so largely come to our democratic position that it is perfectly clear that the trend in the whole church of Christ is toward democracy. There is not the same reason, therefore, for us to be afraid of adopting some of the useful methods of administration which our fathers rightly regarded as dangerous. In our city mission societies, in our home mission policy, and in our representative conventions we are moving toward more definite denominational unity.

Some forms and practices which were not used in our Baptist churches in the past are being adopted rather widely to-day. This does not in any sense mean a departure from the spirit that has made our history glorious. It means rather that the great victory for spiritual religion has been so largely

won that some matters that were vital in the past are of less importance now. We are, therefore, enriching our church life and worship by the addition of some of those forms and practices which belong to the church universal.

Our fathers protested against the prayer book, not because they believed in the inherent sinfulness of written or printed prayers, though sometimes the more extreme of them were forced even to this view, but because they denied the right of any ecclesiastical body to determine for them when and in what manner they should pray. They protested against vestments, not because they abhorred appropriate apparel in worship, but because they believed the heart of the worshiper to be the essential element and the garment to be so entirely secondary as to become a negligible consideration. They protested against the observance of times and seasons, not because they believed these things wrong in themselves, but because they were employed to fetter the free spirit of faith. We are likely to discover new beauties in the dignity of formal service and appropriate attire, and to find considerable value in the observance of those festivals and times of religious emphasis which belong to the church. All things are ours—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the prayer book, Easter, Lent, and all else—for use in the free service of God, but not as an instrument of ecclesiastical bondage.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES

THE right of organization lies in any company of Christians who desire to form themselves into a self-governing church. It is usual that they live sufficiently near to each other to meet statedly for worship and to unite in Christian activities. The church thus formed ought to be approved by the neighboring churches represented in council. This approval would give to it that denominational recognition which would entitle it to full standing as a Baptist church. The right of organization is inherent in the local body of believers. The right of recognition belongs to the sisterhood of churches, with which the local church expects fellowship.

Preparatory steps of organization. It is important that in the organization of a Baptist church careful attention should be given to local conditions which seem to call for the organization, and also that from the beginning the advice and fellowship of neighboring churches should be sought.

Where the Association has an Advisory Committee, it is well that its counsel be taken from the outset, otherwise advice should be sought from a neigh-

boring pastor of standing and large experience.

The neighborhood should first be canvassed, and a list of prospective members should be obtained. It is advisable that these should have signed in advance a simple preliminary covenant which will afford the basis of a temporary organization. The following has been used successfully in cases of this kind:

“For the glory of God, for the service of our fellow-men, and for mutual assistance in our Christian life, the undersigned agree to become charter members of a Baptist church.”

The extreme brevity and freedom from technicality of such a statement is an advantage.

A preliminary meeting may be held and a committee appointed to present a constitution, covenant, and, if desired, articles of faith. Where such a preliminary meeting is inexpedient, these documents may be prepared in advance by the leaders of the movement or by a neighboring pastor.

A formal call should be issued for the organization, and should become a part of the minutes of the meeting. It may be published in a local paper or sent individually to prospective members.

On the appointed date the meeting may be called to order by a neighboring pastor, or by some person appointed for the purpose. A temporary clerk should be elected, and the call for the meeting read. The names of the persons who have signified their intention of uniting with the church should be read,

and if a sufficient number are found to be present, the business of the meeting may proceed. A permanent moderator and clerk should now be chosen, and prayer offered by the presiding officer, or some person upon whom he may call.

The persons who are to join by letter from other churches should produce their credentials, and these papers should be submitted to a committee. If there is objection to any name proposed, the prospective members have a right by vote to refuse to associate that person with themselves as a charter member of the church; but if no objection is raised, the names need not be voted upon separately. If the committee finds the letters to be in due form, it may report favorably upon the prospective membership as a whole.

A motion is then in order, and may be in substance as follows: "Voted that we now proceed to take the necessary steps toward the organization of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ to be known as the Baptist Church."

This motion being open for discussion, it should be made clear that such a church is needed; that the field is not already covered by neighboring churches; that it has good prospect of reaching self-support within a reasonable period, and that those who are to constitute the church represent the best interests of the community in the undertaking. These matters being established, the motion may be adopted.

The covenant, statement of doctrine, and consti-

tution and by-laws may now be presented and adopted.

The election of officers will then be in order. If deacons and trustees are to be so chosen that terms of office do not all expire at once, one officer should be elected for one year, another for two, and another for three, as the constitution may direct.

It may be wise to adjourn the meeting at this point and to complete it at a Sunday covenant service, holding the charter membership open until that date. In that case the persons to be received into the fellowship of the church who were not present at the business meeting should present themselves and be accepted by vote as charter members of the church, and the whole body then going forward as their names are read may receive the hand of fellowship. This service may appropriately be followed by a communion service.

This method of effecting an organization in two meetings, one called especially for the transaction of business, and the second called upon a Sunday for the purpose of joining in the covenant, possesses some marked practical advantages. Where it is employed there should be a formal vote at the second service ratifying the proceedings of the previous meeting, and the covenant service should be considered an adjourned session of the meeting for organization.

Recognition of a church. A Baptist church organized as herein directed will properly seek recog-

nition through a council, and later seek admittance to the Association. If a council is to be called, it should represent fairly the churches of the vicinage, and indeed most properly all of the churches in the Association of which the new church may expect to become a member. A letter missive should be sent out in form and in substance like that contained in Part II of this book.

The council, convening on the day appointed and being duly organized, should first have presented to it all the records of the church from the beginning, together with the constitution, creed, and covenant. Any further statement concerning the admission of such a church may be made, and the council may go into executive session to consider the wisdom of the undertaking. If it appear to the council that the organization is advisable, it should vote first to approve the organization, articles of faith, and covenant of the church; and, secondly, to recommend the church to the fellowship of the Association.

Two copies of the minutes of the council should be prepared, signed by the moderator and clerk. One of these should be furnished to the clerk of the Association and the other to the clerk of the church. The latter should be entered in the record book of the church and permanently preserved.

At the next meeting of the Association the church should be represented by its pastor and two delegates, and formal application should be made for

admission. Resolutions to this effect may be substantially in the following words:

Voted that the Baptist Church in organized 19...., and recognized by the council of the vicinage on..... hereby applies for admission to the Association, as a Baptist church in fellowship and regular standing.

The disbanding of a church. Sometimes through changes in the population of a community it becomes advisable to disband a church, or to combine it with another church. In such a case competent advice should be sought to secure all legal rights in the premises. If money has been invested in the church by the Home Mission Society, the State Convention, or the City Mission Society, care should be taken to secure all the legal and moral equities involved. Public notice should be given that all members may have knowledge of the proposed action. In any case of doubt a council should be called, or the advice of the Association should be sought. If any considerable number of the members still believe the church to be needed, and are willing to continue its responsibilities, respectful heed should be given to their desires and promises, without, however, jeopardizing important interests for what may be a too confident hope. If it should finally appear that the church is no longer needed the following steps may be taken: First, it may be voted that this church proceed to take the necessary steps to

dispose of its property and to disband. Secondly, the trustees should be directed to dispose of the property either by deed to the Home Mission Society, or in such other way as to provide for the proper securing of the interests of the denomination. A bill of sale of the personal property should also be authorized. In some cases the members of a church have divided the property among themselves. This may be technically legal, but it is practical theft. Even if no society has contributed to the church, the money has been given by individuals for religious use, and is a sacred trust in the hands of the membership. It should always be turned over to some representative denominational body. Thirdly, it should be voted that the clerk have authority to grant letters to all members now on the rolls of the church to any church of like faith and order. Fourthly, it should be voted that the records, when completed, be deposited with the clerk of the Association. Finally, all necessary business being completed, it should be voted that the church do now disband.

Uniting two churches. Two churches, both being incorporated and owning their own property, may unite by majority vote of both churches, and take the name and organization of either, or agree upon a new name. The choice of the new name does not necessitate the overthrow of the older organizations, and the united church under a new name may so conduct its business as merely to effect

a reorganization of both churches under the one new name. Regardless of the name chosen, the original date of the older organization should be retained as the date of the organization of the united church. To bring this to pass without sacrifice of any vested interest a good Christian lawyer should be consulted; and the matter should be considered carefully by some one with experience in such affairs.

Members voting against the merger are still members of the united church in good standing, but should be given letters if they insist upon it.

Dividing a church. A church may divide by vote. But this action is quite different from that of uniting two churches, in that the church cannot by majority vote dismiss a group of members against their individual choice, nor set them apart as those to form the new church. By unanimous consent the parish might be divided geographically, and, one organization taking a new name, each could date its records from the beginning of the united church. But usually a new church is formed, composed of such members as request letters of dismission for the purpose of joining it. The question of equitable division of the property is sometimes a very difficult one. It has been too easily assumed that the members who leave to form the new church must, of necessity, go empty-handed. It might well be that justice and Christian consideration would require that a goodly sum be given to the departing members, even if a mortgage would have to be

put on the old property in order to start the new work. At least the matter should be carefully considered, and in some cases should be submitted to the arbitration of a council.

The incorporation of a church. The incorporation of a church is a very simple matter. The laws of the several States are framed to conform to the usages of the various denominations; so that the directions here given will, with slight adaptations, fit the requirements of most States. In case of any doubt it would be well to consult a Christian lawyer, who would furnish the form as required in the statutes of the State in which the church is situated.

The following directions are adequate for most cases:

Prepare a written notice to be signed by the number of members required by the rules of the local church, and preferably by its Board of Trustees, announcing that at a regular midweek meeting on a certain date the church will be asked to vote upon the question of becoming incorporated. Let this notice be read from the pulpit one or two Sundays before the date of meeting, according to the rules of the church. This call should be incorporated in the minutes of the meeting.

A resolution substantially in the following form may then be presented:

Resolved, that this church apply for incorporation under the statutes of this State; and that Messrs. A. B., C. D., and E. F., now serving as trustees, be the trustees of

this incorporation; and that they and the chairman and secretary of this meeting be authorized and instructed to act for the church in the preparation and filing of the necessary papers.

The papers to be filed, which should be ready in advance, require in some States the signatures of all the incorporators, who must not be less than three in number. In other States the chairman or secretary of the meeting may make oath to the papers, and merely name the trustees. The following is the form of oath prescribed in some of the States.

State of
..... County, ss.

I, John Doe, do solemnly swear, that at a meeting of the members of the Church of.....
.....held at on
..... Messrs. A. B., C. D., and E. F. were elected trustees, according to the rules and usages of such church. And said church adopted as its corporate name, "The Baptist Church of" and as its corporate seal, the following words: "The Baptist Church of" with the following motto and device:, the whole to be enclosed in a scroll, and to be either written, stamped, or printed. And at said meeting this affiant acted as chairman (or secretary).

(Name)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this
day of, 19....

....., *Notary Public.*

This affidavit, with a copy of the constitution of the church, should be filed with the recorder of deeds, or such other officer as the State appoints for this purpose.

Corporate seal. In some of the States a corporate seal is positively necessary. Seal presses, such as notaries use, are very inexpensive, and a specially designed seal, with a motto or device, or both, costs very few dollars, and is appropriate. Nearly every church has occasion now and then to execute legal documents, and in addition to this it is appropriate that letters missive, church letters, and similar documents should bear a seal.

The device should be simple, for the impression should not exceed two inches in diameter, and it should be a design somewhat easily understood.

CHAPTER III

THE CONSTITUTION OF A BAPTIST CHURCH

THERE is no absolute necessity for a Baptist church to have a written constitution and by-laws. Many churches proceed, somewhat in the manner of the British Parliament, in accordance with general precedent, and obedient to such standing rules as from time to time may have been established. It is altogether desirable, however, in accordance with almost universal American usage in all kinds of organizations, to have definite rules of procedure. New members naturally desire to know the proper order of the body which they join, and questions of procedure should not be left to be determined by the memory of "the oldest inhabitant."

A few general principles are definitely recognized.

The presiding officer. Unless the constitution of the church provides otherwise the pastor is the moderator of all business meetings of the church, excepting those which relate to his own work or salary, or which may have been called for the consideration of some matter in which he has a personal interest. In the absence of the pastor the senior deacon may call a meeting of the church to

order and call for the nomination of a moderator, or if the meeting is one especially for the consideration of financial business the chairman of the Board of Trustees or of the finance committee, instead of the senior deacon, may call the meeting to order. There are a few churches which elect a moderator for the year to preside at all the business meetings of the church. There is difference of opinion upon this point, however, but the practice has some advantages.

Records. The clerk of the church should keep a correct record of all business transacted by the church, and should record it in a permanently bound book provided for that purpose. It is not necessary that he should record motions made and lost, nor the names of those who participate in the discussions, nor in general the number of votes cast for or against a motion or a candidate for office.

The important items to be entered upon the records are: First, the time and place of the meeting, with a copy of the call, if a special call has been issued. Secondly, the devotional service with which the meeting is opened. Thirdly, the name of the moderator. Fourthly, the reading of past records and their approval by the church. Fifthly, the business transacted, including reports of committees, which need not be copied in full, but which should be referred to and kept on file and whose formal recommendations should be included in the minutes. Sixthly, the full text of all resolutions

or motions passed by the church. Seventhly, adjournment. Eighthly, signature of the clerk.¹

Unless there is a demand for a yea and nay vote the names of persons favoring or opposing a measure should not be recorded. It is not generally necessary or expedient to record the names of persons making routine motions, but formal resolutions should be recorded with the name of the member proposing them, or the committee or the Board by which they are presented.

All motions that are formal in their nature and whose full substance may not easily be gathered by the clerk when verbally stated, should be submitted in writing.

The financial management of the church. The officers who have charge of the finances of the church should be men of unquestioned probity. They should be men of experience and of recognized character, and should attend to the business affairs of the church with promptness and accuracy. The treasurer should be a man of blameless honesty, and should be protected by all the safeguards that would be employed in any business of like responsibility. If there is a local bank he should deposit all money of the church and pay all bills with checks, retaining vouchers for each expenditure, and having all his accounts thoroughly audited. He should keep all the benevolent funds of the church

¹ "The Church Clerk," by Rev. Z. Grenell, D. D., American Baptist Publication Society, is an excellent compendium of the duties of this officer.

separate from those for current expenses; and, of course, should keep all church moneys entirely separate from his own money. These are simple suggestions and ought to be needless.

In many churches the financial management is in the hands of the trustees. The best experience seems to indicate, however, that it is wise to give to the trustees merely the legal duties belonging to them under the statute. They may have the care of the building, and represent the church in all legal matters. It is very much wiser for the financial management to be in the hands of a less stable body. A finance committee, including the treasurer of the church, appointed every year, is likely to remain nearer to the membership of the church than the trustees, who are appointed for long terms and for a different purpose.

The unity of the church organization. It is desirable that the constitution should provide that all societies should be part of the single church organization. Great harm has come from the loose idea that the church is the body meeting for worship, while men's clubs, and women's societies, and young people's societies, and the Sunday-school, and a dozen other organizations are separate bodies altogether autonomous. Each of these should be definitely related to the church itself. The pastor and deacons should have a general oversight of them all.

Business meetings. The ordinary business of the church may be transacted at any midweek meet-

ing, or in case of necessity at any Sunday service, without previous notice. Record should always be carefully kept of such business. If the clerk is not present a temporary clerk should be appointed. It is customary for constitutions to specify the number of members who must be present in order to constitute a quorum. No question involving the appropriation of money, or important changes in the policy of the church, or amendment to its system of doctrine or rules, should be undertaken without previous public notice. In general, propositions contemplating the expenditure of money should previously be considered by the Finance Committee, and matters affecting the policy and doctrine of the church should be considered in advance by the deacons. This is not legally necessary, but it is a courteous recognition of those in office, and almost invariably a motion gains greatly in favor if the person proposing it is able to say that this has received the approval of the official Board which it most nearly concerns.

When special meetings are called by a group of members, or by one of the official Boards, the call signed by the members who have drafted it should be read from the pulpit on the Sunday previous to the meeting and incorporated into the minutes of the meetings.

Annual church meetings. Annual meetings of the church, and meetings for the election of officers, should be conducted with special care to express the

will of the church, and to preserve its records. The reports of the treasurer should be audited and approved. The records of the clerk should be certified. All branches of the church work should be heard from, and the officers should be elected with care to conform to all the requirements of the church constitution and rules. All things should be done decently and in order, and with a view to edifying.

The form of constitution. Each church should prepare its constitution to meet its own special needs. A form of constitution which is not unduly elaborate so as to be incapable of adaptation has been prepared, and will be found in Part II. It should, of course, be kept in mind, as is suggested in connection with the Rules of Order, that a church is not to be conducted with the punctilious exactness of a debating society. The member who is continually rising to a point of order is a nuisance. At the same time an orderly and regular procedure is conducive alike to efficiency and harmony. The constitution, therefore, may well cover everything that is likely to arise in the general conduct of the church.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONDUCT OF CHURCH MEETINGS

THE constitution and by-laws of the church are its supreme law. But the general conduct of its business is amenable to the ordinary rules of deliberative bodies. It is usual to specify in the by-laws some standard manual of parliamentary law as that which shall be followed. Robert's "Rules of Order" is most commonly employed, although Barton's "Rules of Order for Ecclesiastical Assemblies" is being found more satisfactory for church meetings. The rules should be followed with care, as orderly procedure tends to facilitate business; but it is a great mistake to endeavor to conduct a church meeting with the precision of a session of Congress. In large meetings, however, such as the Northern and Southern Baptist Conventions, the absolute exactness of parliamentary procedure is of very great importance.

Opening a meeting. The moderator announces that the assembly will be in order, and then calls upon some member to offer prayer. The minutes of the preceding meeting should then be read and approved. If brief business is done at regular mid-week meetings and a more formal business meeting

is held once a month, the minutes of all the business should be read at the latter meeting.

The introduction of business. Business may come before the church by reports of officers and committees or by motions duly made and seconded. There should be a regular order in which officers and standing committees make reports upon the business committed to their care. If these reports relate simply to what has been done, and contain no specific recommendations, it is sufficient that a motion be made after each report has been read that it "be received." The motion is really unnecessary, but is a courteous expression of general approval. If, however, a standing or special committee makes recommendations, these require more definite action. The most correct form is for the chairman of the committee to present its recommendations in a series of resolutions, and to move that the church adopt them. This, however, is not commonly done. The committee states in its report what action it advises the church to take. If no one desires that such action be taken the motion to receive the report ends the matter. If some member approves the recommendation he should move that it be adopted. This opens the subject for discussion, and further action will be in accordance with the rules governing motions.

The disposition of a question. The motion to adopt the recommendations of a committee, or a motion to take some definite action of any kind,

having been made, the moderator should state it clearly and give opportunity for discussion. It may be disposed of in one of the following ways:

1. By simple vote it may be carried or lost.
2. It may be changed in any way desired by an amendment. Such amendment must be discussed and voted upon before the main motion can be further considered. The amendment may itself be amended in the same way, but the process cannot go further.
3. If the amendment is lost the question recurs to its original form. If it has been carried, the question is still before the meeting in its amended form, and must be voted upon.
4. If it is desired to take somewhat different action than the motion contemplates, but which is too far different to be put in the form of amendment, a substitute motion may be offered. This has the same character as an amendment. If lost, the question recurs to its original form. But if the substitute is carried it must still be voted upon again as the main motion.
5. If it is felt that the meeting is not ready to discuss the motion, but that a committee should first consider it, a motion may be made to refer it to a committee; or, if it is desired to refer it back to the committee from which it came, the motion should be to "recommit." The matter will then come before the church again when this committee reports.

6. If it is desired to get rid of the whole matter without discussion, the simplest motion is to “lay on the table.” This is undebatable and must be at once put. It should not be employed to stifle discussion in any discourteous manner, but is very useful when no definite action is desirable.

7. If simple postponement is desired the motion should not be to lay on the table, but to “postpone to a certain time.” This motion is not debatable.

The point of order. The moderator decides the method of procedure, but if he makes mistake and allows some matter to be done irregularly, it is permissible for any member to call his attention to the fact. The form is the statement: “I rise to a point of order.” This may be done at any time. The moderator will ask the objector to state his point, and will then give his decision. If the member still objects to the decision he may appeal to the meeting, using the form, “I appeal from the decision of the chair.” This must receive a second. The moderator will then put the motion in the form, “Shall the decision of the chair stand as the judgment of the church?” An affirmative vote will sustain his decision; a negative vote will reverse it. It need hardly be said that points of order should be raised in church meetings only in the kindest spirit, and only if some very serious breach of order seems to be made; and that an appeal from the chair should not be taken unless gravely necessary.

Making a motion. In making a motion one

should rise and address the chair. On recognition by the chair he proceeds to make his motion. All motions must receive a second in order to be entertained. Lost motions are not usually recorded. In discriminating as to persons addressing the chair at the same time the chairman recognizes first the most distant speaker, the largest number, and the most remote date.

Voting. The vote is usually taken by show of hands or by saying aye and no. If the chair is in doubt, a rising vote should be taken. Elections should generally be by ballot.

It should be understood that the motion that "the secretary cast the ballot" is really a unanimous agreement that every one except the secretary shall refrain from voting. If, therefore one other person desires to vote, this form of election by ballot cannot be used.

Adjournment. Formal business meetings close by a motion to adjourn. This may be amended if it is thought desirable to fix a set time to which adjournment shall be made. A motion to adjourn is not debatable, and when seconded must be put.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

REASON for the society. Many of the older Baptist churches have societies affiliated with them for the purpose of holding and managing the church property. This double system of church and society is a legacy from old days in New England, when a church could not become incorporated, and the parish owned the church property and provided for the support of public worship.

It has been argued in defense of the system that it enables men of good judgment, who are well disposed toward the church and are supporters of it, to assume definite responsibility with reference to the business affairs of the church, in which affairs their judgment is often of real worth. But it is a cumbersome arrangement, involving occasional embarrassment, and few of the new churches adopt it. Many churches that formerly employed the system have changed to a single organization.

Powers and limitations. Where the society exists, it is a holding corporation, managing the business interests of the church. It owns the church property, subject to the use of the church, but can have no power to alienate the property, or to use it

for purposes contrary to the welfare of the church. It can, however, refuse to provide means for the repair of the building or for the support of its minister, and this it sometimes has been known to do, though happily not frequently.

Both church and society must concur in the call of a pastor. The action must originate with the church, the society having no power to begin proceedings looking toward the securing of the minister. The church having issued an invitation to a pastor, first notifies the society of its proposed call, and the society considers whether it will concur in the call, and provide the support of the minister. The society has sole power to fix the compensation of the pastor, and is the only body that can be sued. The church alone is responsible for the conduct of the pastor, who is not commonly a member of the society, but is invariably a member of the church. Should the minister displease the society, he cannot be expelled by that body without the consent of the church. The society can, however, refuse to support him. If he has a contract for a definite period, his salary can be collected from the society by civil process. Should the church desire to terminate the pastorate, the concurrence of the society must be secured.

It is rather remarkable that so complicated a system has not given rise to more frequent friction. Usually the arrangement has worked well, although it is an unequal yoking together of things unlike.

In nearly if not all the States now, a church can incorporate as a "corporation not for profit." As such a corporation it has full power to hold its own property, and conduct its own business. Where the double system of organization exists, and it is desired to simplify the arrangement, the church should first secure incorporation. The society then at a special meeting, in whose call the purpose of the meeting is definitely stated, should transfer all its property to the church, the land and building by deed and the personal property by bill of sale. The transfer being completed, the society may disband. In case of any question of property rights the guidance of a lawyer may be sought, but the process is a simple one where all parties are in agreement.

In view of the manifest disadvantages, and of the passing of the condition which in the beginning made necessary the organization of the society, it is earnestly recommended that new churches avoid this needless complication, and that wherever conditions are favorable to such action, the society convey its property to the incorporated church with which it is affiliated, and then disband.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A BAPTIST church is a democratic body. All members have equal privileges. In the older churches only adult male members voted in matters pertaining to the business of the church, and many churches fix a minimum age, below which children are not entitled to vote. In all matters relating to important changes in the constitution or transfer of property, votes should be cast only by persons of legal age, or of an age specified in the constitution. Except for these simple restrictions, all the members of a Baptist church stand upon an equal basis. All officers are chosen by the body of the church, and the final voice is that of the people.

Conditions of membership. The conditions of membership in a Baptist church are (1) confession of loyalty to Christ by submission to the ordinance of baptism as practised in the New Testament church, (2) assent to its covenant, and (3) the affirmative vote of the majority of the members present and voting at a meeting of the church where such business may properly be transacted. The covenant should be brief and simple, and have embodied in it a brief confession of faith in

Christ, and the promise to submit to the government and discipline of the church, to walk with the members of the church as Christian brethren, and to promote the edification, purity, and peace of the church until regularly dismissed therefrom.

Assent to the creed is not a necessary condition of church-membership in a Baptist church. The creed is an attempt to embody the substance of that faith in which the church interprets the word of God, but the word of God itself and not the creed offers the final test. The creed, however, is not to be disregarded by any member of the church, although it admits of a very wide latitude of interpretation, and is always adopted as a document subject to revision.

A person desiring membership in a Baptist church is first examined as to his fitness for membership. This examination may be conducted before the whole body of the church, or it may be delegated to a committee composed of the pastor and deacons, or of such other members as the church appoints. It is not the purpose of such an examination to break the bruised reed nor quench the dimly burning light; but he that is weak in the faith is commonly received, and not to doubtful disputations. An examination conducted in a spirit of Christian kindness is of value in protecting the church against unworthy members, and also affords a profitable introduction to new members.

A candidate having been examined as to his fit-

ness for membership, and having been approved by the examining body, is recommended for membership in the church. He makes a simple statement of his faith and desire to unite with the church by baptism. It is the right of any member to ask questions of the candidate, but this right should be used only with kindness. Questions should never be inquisitorial unless the interrogator has good grounds to fear that an unworthy person is about to be received. The proper form of motion is that the candidate be accepted and after baptism be received into the membership of the church. Sometimes the applicant is required to withdraw while the vote is taken, but this is not essential, nor indeed wholly desirable.

Persons desiring to unite by letter should present their letters to the pastor or chairman of the deacons. Letters should be acted on only upon recommendation of the deacons. This may generally be a mere formality, but sometimes may afford a most valuable opportunity for investigation.

It is usual for the minister at the following communion service to extend to each of the new members the hand of fellowship, and to address to each one a word of greeting and encouragement. This, however, is not essential to membership, and the failure to receive the hand of fellowship in no way impairs membership.

The rights of members. Each member of a church has a right to share in its public worship, to

participate in its meetings for conference and prayer, to discuss proposed measures and changes, and, subject to such age restriction as the constitution may require, to vote in the transaction of its business and in the election of its officers. Each member is eligible to any office in the gift of the church—the church having full authority to constitute one of its own members a trustee, a deacon, or even a minister; and the minister, whether elected from the membership of the church or called from another church to become its minister, is a member of the church in all respects and with rights the same as those of the laity.

Each member of the church is sole custodian of his own conscience, having a right to interpret the Scriptures and to determine his own conduct in the light of that interpretation, so long as his conduct does not infringe upon the rights of others, nor disturb the peace or impugn the good name of the church. It is not essential to Christian fellowship that all members of the church should think alike, or that the creed should be held in such complete uniformity of interpretation as to fetter the conscience of the members. The member who has come to differ from the creed of the church need not too hastily assume that he has no further right to be a member of the body. He has the right to induce the church to change its creed if he can; and if he fails in this endeavor, he still may consider whether his own change of faith is such as to pre-

vent his continuing in fellowship with his brethren in the spirit of the church covenant. By that covenant he is bound to seek the edification, purity, and peace of the church. He has no right to disturb the church by wearisome, profitless discussion, nor has the church a right to impose upon him any undue tests in the name of Christian faith, nor to call unclean and common that which God has cleansed. The final test is that of Christian character. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

The majority rule. Yet it is desirable that the unity of the Spirit shall be preserved in the bonds of peace. An inconsiderate majority, determined to rule by mere force of numbers, and a peevish, vindictive minority, have neither of them any proper place in a Christian church. We cannot all think alike, but we can all love alike; and the majority vote is of value, not in determining who may "rule" in arrogant dominion, but what is the mind of the Spirit expressed through the united membership of the church, which is the body of Christ.

The rights of the minority. The principle that in a Baptist church the majority rules, is not to be understood in such a sense as that a member is deprived of any right on account of being in the minority. It is his indisputable right to be in the minority if he chooses to be so. He is to hold his opinion and express it freely, but always in charity;

and so long as he does this he cannot be censured for not voting with the majority.

When a church adopts new methods or creed tests and a minority refuse to accept them, they are not thereby disfellowshipped nor subject to any disability.

Duties of members of the church. It is the duty of every member of the church to perform faithfully the letter and spirit of its covenant, to separate himself from sin and the appearance of evil, to make the rule of Christ the test of his worldly business and amusements, and to live a life of prayer and obedience to the word of God. It is his duty to attend the services of the church as regularly as may be, and to contribute to its support and to its benevolent agencies, in proportion to his ability and to the point of personal sacrifice. It is his duty to exercise toward his fellow-members a spirit of Christian courtesy and consideration, bearing with the weak and manifesting toward all the spirit of Christian brotherhood, which is the spirit of Christ. Each member should find some sphere of activity in which he may perform some duty peculiarly his own.

Dismission. A member of a church removing to another locality or desiring for any other good reason to change his church relations, may apply for a letter of dismissal from the church of which he is a member, and of recommendation to another church with which it is in fellowship. Such letters are

granted by all Baptist churches to churches of our own faith. In order to avoid the necessity of passing upon the evangelical status of churches of other denominations, it has not been customary to grant letters to members going from our own to such other bodies. A member is always entitled, however, to a certificate of his Christian standing in the church. This serves all the purposes of a letter of dismissal, and when it is formally granted to an applicant has the effect of terminating his membership. Forms of letters will be found in Part II.

Letters of dismissal should be requested in person or by writing. A letter requesting dismissal may properly convey to the church some expression of Christian fellowship, of happy memory, and of continued interest.

A letter of dismissal granted to a member must be addressed to a particular church. It is not orderly to give letters not designating the church to which they are to be presented. There is an erroneous opinion held by many that they possess by right a letter of church membership, which may be "put into" or "taken out of" a church at will. A disaffected member often "calls" for his letter. Of course he has no letter. He has a church-membership, which he may rightly have changed from one church to another, but he cannot hold his membership in suspension. He cannot obtain a "demit." It has generally been held that a member cannot resign, but resignation from any organization

is an inherent right, which the church should be the last body to deny.

What is good and regular standing? A letter certifying that a member is in good and regular standing merely testifies that there are no charges against him. It does not certify that he is in all respects what those voting for the letter could wish him to be. The expression "good and regular standing" is technical, and is that which describes the status of all members who are not under discipline.

When may a church refuse a letter? A church may always refuse a letter to a member under discipline, or to one who is concerned in a recent scandal or misdemeanor, and who applies for a letter to protect himself from discipline. But a church that has carried on its roll the name of a member who is negligent or unfaithful to duty, and has long been known as such, and which has neglected to discipline him, may not bring him to trial for long-past offenses after he has applied for his letter. But it may refuse him a letter if in addition he has been guilty of recent and more gross offenses; or if the failure of the church to bring him to trial has been by reason of a desire to labor with him in private in the hope of bringing him to repentance.

Status of dismissed members. Members dismissed by letter remain theoretically members of the church until the letter is accepted by another church. The period of a letter's validity is commonly limited to six months. After that time it lapses, and the

member remains in the church of his former membership. In practice, however, most churches erase the name of a member as soon as a letter is granted. It may easily happen therefore that one loses membership in one church without gaining it in another. Churches should regard dismissed members as non-resident until notified of their reception by some other church. The difficulty in the way of this regular procedure is the carelessness of clerks in sending such notifications. If the regular course is pursued, at the end of one year or two years, as the church may provide in its constitution, the name of the absent member may be placed on the absent list. Letters subsequently granted to such members should be on condition that the member shall account for his conduct in the interval.

Dropping names from roll. Persons who have been absent from a church for a period of years and have not been heard from may be dropped from the membership of the church by vote of the church, the names having been read at a previous meeting. The custom of dropping names is comparatively modern and has been much opposed, many good authorities contending that in such case the church has no alternative but excommunication. The custom, however, has attained recognized standing, and is certain to be established because of its manifest usefulness. A church cannot be compelled to cumber its roll indefinitely with the names of persons long absent, who may be no longer living, nor

can it be compelled to excommunicate members against whom it has no positive knowledge of un-Christian conduct. The practice of dropping names, while needing to be kept free from abuse, is one that deserves recognition as an established Baptist custom.

Questions sometimes arise concerning the granting of a letter to a person whose name has been dropped. Cases have been known where members, after a long interval, have requested a letter after their names have disappeared from the roll. If the former member shows reasonable evidence that he has continued to live a Christian life, or if he gives evidence of recent conversion, the church has option of two courses. First, it may reinstate him for the purpose of granting him a regular letter. This can be done at any business meeting of the church. Secondly, the church may issue a certificate that he became a member on a certain date and remained in fellowship with the church until a certain time when he removed from the vicinity of the church; that during that period he was a member in good standing; that on account of long absence his name had been removed from the roll; and that the church, while unable to grant him an ordinary letter of recognition, rejoices to know of his desire for a renewal of church relations.

Letters without dismissal. A member of a church contemplating prolonged absence and de-

siring to establish relations with Christians in other places may ask the church for a letter of recognition without dismission. Such letters have the force of a vote of confidence and of Christian introduction. They may be granted by the pastor or the clerk of the church without a special vote of authorization. Such letters have become common in churches in the vicinity of colleges where young people desire to establish church relations during the years of their college course without terminating their membership in the home church. Such letters are useful and the custom deserves to be more widely adopted.

Dismission to other evangelical organizations. If a member of the church in good standing requests dismission to another evangelical body, he should be labored with in love, and every right endeavor put forth to retain him in the fellowship of the church. But if he insist, he should not be thrust out harshly, nor merely dropped from the roll. While a letter cannot be addressed to that evangelical body, the member may be given a certificate that up to the time of his dismission he was a member in regular standing, and that his membership is terminated at his own request.

Discipline of church members. Any member of a church who is guilty of gross irregularity of conduct may be disciplined by the church. In all such cases the usual rule to be followed is that laid down by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18. Where the offense is

private between two members of the church, these two should seek by all reasonable means to settle the matter amicably between themselves. If this fails, they may call in one or more Christian brethren, through whose counsel, prayer, and admonition they may hope for a brotherly settlement of their differences. Very rarely should it be necessary to bring such matters up before the body of the church.

Where the matter is private but does not directly involve another member of the church, yet is known to one or more members, he who has knowledge of the fault should go in a Christian spirit to the offender and endeavor to secure his acknowledgment of the wrong he has done and of his promise to forsake it. If he fails in this endeavor he may invite two or three members of the church in the hope that they may effect penitence and a reconciliation.

Where the matter involves grave public scandal, any member of the church, but preferably the officers, may at once approach the offender and request him to protect the good name of the church and to save the name of Christ from dishonor, by forsaking his evil way and making public confession of his fault.

If these measures fail, the matter may be presented to the church in a formal complaint, specifying the wrong that has been done and relating the steps that have already been undertaken in the hope

of reconciliation. The church may appoint a time to hear the complaint and furnish notice of the time and a full copy of the charge to the person accused. If it is inexpedient that the trial should be conducted by the church as a whole, the church may appoint a committee to inquire into the case and to make its report to the church.

If the offending brother ignores the invitation of the church or its committee and refuses to attend the meeting of inquiry, the church may proceed without him, and hear the evidence and deal with the matter as shall seem best. In that case, however, a member should be appointed to represent the one concerned, and to secure his interests against haste or prejudice.

Testimony at church trials. A church has no authority to compel witnesses or to administer oaths. It must secure its evidence as it can. On the other hand it is by no means bound to the narrow limits of court procedure. In the absence of opposing testimony it must assume that actions mean what they seem to mean, that conduct springs from such motives as generally result in those acts, and that associations involve the relationship and acts which they seem to imply. The frequenting of improper places without a manifest good reason with the result of scandal must be held to involve the conduct which those places suggest. What is called "common fame" or generally accepted report must be given due weight in ecclesiastical trials, as it

does not and cannot have in courts of law. The man who so conducts himself as to incur the appearance of evil and to bring discredit upon the name of the church, and who is persistent and obdurate in that offense, and who offers no reasonable explanation, cannot compel the church to prove him guilty of specific acts of immorality. The church may properly act upon the appearance which he has chosen to give to his conduct.

The exclusion of a member. A member of a church may be publicly reprimanded, suspended for a period, or excommunicated. The common form of the vote of excommunication is expressed in the words that the church "withdraw fellowship" from such a member. It is a motion happily not often employed, and should be used, when at all, with prayer and tears.

The right of a church to discipline its members. The church has an inherent right belonging to all deliberative bodies to enforce its own laws and punish offenders against them. It has no power of punishment, however, beyond that of exclusion from its membership. It has no right to establish a boycott against the person's business, nor to persecute him in his subsequent efforts to establish church relationship or to earn a living. It has the right, however, to give official information in response to inquiries to other churches, or to those who have a right to know, for their protection, the character and history of the man. A member of

a church can recover damages even when the truth is told against him, if that truth is told vindictively and without a manifest necessity. An official communication, however, from an accredited officer of one church to another for its protection against an evil-doer is privileged, and not subject to the law of libel.

The law of libel. A man's reputation as a present or former member of the church is a very sacred thing, and the courts will not lightly regard any attempt to defame or persecute an excommunicated member, even though he is guilty. In general, the principle is that the right of a church to discipline its members holds only within the sphere of his church-membership. If a church has withdrawn fellowship from a member, it should not publish the fact to his harm, unless it is impelled to do so for its own protection, or for the protection of sister churches. It has an inherent right to purge its own roll from unworthy members, to free its good name from the dishonor of their scandals, and to protect other churches from dishonor. But it has no right to libel any person, even with the truth.

"A libel is a malicious defamation expressed either by writing, or printing, or by signs, pictures, effigies, or the like, tending to blacken the memory of one who is dead, or to impeach the honesty, integrity, virtue, or reputation, or publish the natural or alleged defects of one who is alive, and there-

by expose him to public hatred, contempt, ridicule, or obloquy; or to cause him to be shunned or avoided, or to injure him in his office, business, or occupation.”

The above definition is taken from the American and English Encyclopedia of Law, and is attributed by its author to no single authority, but is rather the result of the examination of many authorities, and is believed to set out all the essential elements of libel.

At common law in civil action the truth of the charge will be a sufficient justification apart from any question of good faith or want of malice on the part of the defendant, and independently of the time when the knowledge of the truth came to the defendant.

But under constitutional or statutory provisions in some jurisdictions the defendant cannot exempt himself from liability for publishing a libel simply by showing that the charge was true, but must go further and show that the publication was made under such circumstances as to justify the conclusions that he acted with good motives and for justifiable ends. The rule laid down under statute in Massachusetts is that truth of libelous matter may be given in evidence, and forms a complete defense unless malicious intention is shown, the burden being on the plaintiff to show malice.

In Illinois the statute provides that: “In all prosecutions for libel, the truth, when published

with good motives, and for justifiable ends, shall be a sufficient defense.”

The burden of proof is upon the defendant to establish the truth of the charge; and matter of justification, to be of any avail, must meet and answer the substance of the libelous charge. The letter and form of the charge are not required, but the essence is indispensable.

CHAPTER VII

THE BAPTIST MINISTER

IT is theoretically the right of every church to ordain its own minister, but the minister so ordained has standing only in that church, except as other churches in fellowship may have knowledge of the act and acknowledge it as authoritative and orderly. For the protection of the churches, however, the responsibility of ordaining ministers is delegated to councils. The form of the finding of the council is that of recommendation to the church to ordain, but in practice the matter rests really with the council.

Any church may delegate to one of its members authority to administer baptism or the Lord's Supper within that church. Even the Roman Catholic Church believes in the right of lay baptism when no priest can be procured. In the administration of the Lord's Supper the need has more frequently arisen, in scattered communities, that an unordained person, acting for the time as the spiritual leader of the church, should be empowered to administer the ordinances of the church. The occasions for the exercise of such power on the part of the local body, however, are increasingly infre-

quent, and no church should avail itself of this liberty except in extreme emergencies. So far as orderly Baptist procedure is concerned we may treat of entrance into the ministry as a function of the church at large through a council, which the churches call for that purpose.

The status of the ordained minister. As a matter of Baptist usage, a minister ordained by a local church to be its pastor, and having no other relation to the churches at large, would have no standing, ecclesiastical or legal, as a minister outside that church. It would be a question whether his name would appear in the "Year-Book" as a minister. He would be, in our theory, just what he was in the old New England theory, a minister within his own church, but in no other local congregation. The Massachusetts courts, in a test case involving the ordination of a Congregational minister, decided that such a man is not a minister, and is liable to the penalty of the law if he performs a marriage service.

While the Baptist theory of ordination is not that of admittance to holy orders, in which the clergyman is separated sacerdotally from the laity, it does involve the idea of a permanent setting apart to a ministry which has relation to the church of Christ as a whole, and specifically to the denomination as a whole. The minister has relations at once that are wider than those to the local church. Hence the counsel of the churches is sought in ordination, and the act is one of denominational significance. The

customary form of the finding of the council is that of a recommendation to the church to ordain. So the king of Great Britain takes the advice of his cabinet as to whether he will approve a bill, but usage has long ago settled the question of royal prerogative. In effect, therefore, a man is ordained to the ministry by a council.

So further, the local church, which can, of course, terminate a pastorate, cannot terminate a ministry. A minister may not be deposed from the ministry except by the same careful and representative consideration that admitted him. Again, the finding of a council would take the form of a recommendation to the church (not the church in which he was ordained, but that of which he is at the time a member) to withdraw his ordination papers. But, in effect, it is the council that deposes the minister.

A word should be said regarding the minister who voluntarily leaves the ministry for a distinctly secular calling. The distinction between holy orders and Baptist ordination here permits of a very simple solution of this practical problem. In ordinary cases, the man simply informally ceases to be a minister. His own good judgment should lead him to cease to use the prefix *reverend*, which is only, in any case, a traditional form preserved for convenience among us, and he should quietly withdraw his name from published lists of the ministry.

The termination of a pastorate. That the termination of a pastorate so seldom occasions trouble

in the church is greatly to the honor of the ministry, and somewhat to the honor of the churches as well. For, while a majority vote is necessary to dismiss a minister, still there are few churches in which a small determined minority cannot force a pastor's resignation. Churches with practical unanimity spend their entire revenue and have little financial margin from year to year; so that the mere refusal of a very few people to continue their support is often sufficient to occasion a feeling of restiveness on the part of those who bear the financial burdens. It is disheartening to remember how a single sermon that offends a few influential families may terminate a useful pastorate, or how a single untactful act or unwise utterance on the part of the pastor may destroy the usefulness of a good man in the ministry. On the other hand, it is to be confessed that many churches have shown great patience with the infirmities of their ministers.

When it is apparent to a church that the time has come for a minister to resign, let the matter be taken to him kindly but plainly, and presented to him by those who love him. And let the church give him time to secure another pastorate, and in the meantime labor loyally with him.

In like manner the minister should be loyal to his church. When the time comes for him to go elsewhere, he should time his removal and the notice of it so as least to injure the church, and should do all things to its edification.

The legal value of ministerial reputation. All that has been said in the chapter on Church Membership concerning the law of libel, applies with special force to the minister. In a peculiar sense his reputation is his means of livelihood. To damage a minister's reputation is not merely to hurt his feelings, but is to incur the gravest responsibility by reason of the financial damage which is involved. If he has been deposed from the ministry the churches have a right to know of it for their own protection; but the publication must be without malice, and for a manifest need.

A church, ordinarily, has no right to publish in a wholesale fashion its expulsion of a member. It may cause to be read from its own pulpit the vote of excommunication, but that vote should be carefully drawn and free from reckless denunciation. Its withholding of a letter of commendation is usually a discharge of its responsibility to other churches.

The case is otherwise when a minister is deposed. While his right has additional claims for consideration, because of the legal value of his reputation, the responsibility of the deposing body to the churches is correspondingly greater.

Among those who have in charge the official statement of the status of ministers of the various denominations it is the general agreement that the churches have a right to specific information in connection with any trial to which he may have been

subject. When a council has deposed a minister it has the right to publish its findings. If this were not the case the deposition would be nugatory. A minister has a public function, and his deposition from the ministry is intended to be an official discontinuance of his functions.

Of course it is important that the greatest wisdom shall be used. Direct statements rather than general charges ought to be made. It is fair that definite statements concerning the acts for which a minister is deposed shall be made; but it is scarcely fair, and it is possibly not legally safe, to give wholesale general information as to his character.

It is generally held also that a ministerial bureau has a right to keep a list of unworthy men. This is not a black list. It is official information which has been gathered under proper conditions. One superintendent of such a bureau states the general policy to be as follows: "Information of an unfavorable nature, if it must ever be given, is given only to those who have a clear official right to its possession. By 'persons having a clear official right' we mean committees or authorized representatives of churches looking for pastors, secretaries, or superintendents of home mission societies, and (in some cases a little more doubtful) authorized representatives of ecclesiastical or ministerial bodies, having in their keeping matters affecting ministerial standing."

CHAPTER VIII

ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCILS

AN ecclesiastical council is a body composed of representatives of a group of churches called together for the consideration of a specific matter set forth in a letter missive, which is the charter of the council. As a body destitute of ecclesiastical authority, but thoroughly representative of the judgment of neighboring churches, the council has been rightly held in high esteem in the denomination. It is likely to continue as an important medium for the expression of our fellowship.

The right to call a council. A council may be called by:

1. A local church. A local church may call a council to recognize a newly organized church, to ordain a minister, or to advise in any case of need.

2. Two or more churches. Two or more churches may join in calling a council where they have a common interest in a proposed undertaking, as the organization of a new church lying between them.

A mother church, having organized a mission or branch church into an independent church, may join with the latter in calling a council of recognition.

A group of churches may call a council to determine the wisdom of organizing an Association, or to determine a boundary between Associations, or for other suitable reasons.

In cases where a group of churches having common interests unite in calling a council, the inviting churches may desire to send delegates and participate in the deliberations of the council which they call, and this is orderly if their intentions are stated in the letter missive. In cases where a mother church and a daughter church unite in the call of a council for the recognition of the latter, the mother church may be entitled to representation in the council if the letter missive so states, but in no case where two or more churches unite in calling a council may either of the inviting churches be represented in the council if the occasion for the call is any controversy between the inviting churches.

3. A church and one or more of its members. In any case where a difference of opinion arises between a church and its minister, or the church and one or more members, and the local church has found no satisfactory solution of the difficulty, the two parties may unite in the call of a council.

A council called by two parties having different interests, which they agree to arbitrate before a council, is called a Mutual Council. The term is not applied where two parties are in agreement, as where two churches agree to organize a third church and unite in a letter missive.

4. A minister or other member or group of members. A council may be called by a minister or other member or group of members of a church in a case where serious injustice is alleged to have been done by the local church and the church refuses to make amends. Such a council is called an Ex-parte Council, but is never to be called excepting where a Mutual Council has been refused.

The method of calling a council. A council is called by a letter missive sent to each invited church and individual, giving the name of the body inviting the council, the place and time of meeting, and stating the precise business which is to be presented to the body. It must also give a full list of the churches and individuals who are to compose the council, and should be sent out a sufficient time in advance to give all the churches time for official action.

The number of invited churches. At least all the churches in the Association should be invited to send delegates. It has sometimes happened that a council has been called consisting of only three or four churches. Such a body is not a genuine council. The unit of denominational organization is the Association. Churches should decline to participate in a council more narrowly composed.

The advisory committee on councils. Councils, especially those called for ordination of a candidate or recognition of a church, have often found their decisions rendered nugatory by arrangements

for public services to follow immediately upon the meeting of the council. It is difficult to refuse ordination to a man when the services have been publicly announced, the ordination supper and reception prepared, and the relatives of the candidate invited from afar. The practice is just beginning to secure recognition that no such services should be arranged for in advance of the meeting of the council. The Chicago Association has gone a step farther in the appointment of an advisory committee on councils, without whose advice it is understood that no council shall be called. There is thus provided a preliminary examination by a group of able men of any question that may arise. A man who ought not to seek ordination is kindly advised, and is saved from the public humiliation of refusal by a council. A body of Baptists thinking of organizing a church has a committee whose judgment they may seek before the matter has gone too far to retreat. This committee has proved so useful, and has been so utterly safe so far as genuine Baptist independence is concerned, that the plan is likely to be more generally adopted.

The quorum of a council. A majority of all the invited churches is necessary to a quorum. A church is represented if it sends one delegate. The custom of counting a quorum on the basis of individuals invited is indefensible.

The organization of a council. It is customary for the church inviting the council either to appoint

one of its own members or to select one of the visiting pastors to call the council to order, to speak a word of welcome, and to say that the church has requested him to read the letter missive.

It is the duty of the reader of the letter missive to call for the election of a temporary clerk and to determine whether a quorum is present. As this usually involves the calling of the roll, it is desirable that the roll be made up at this time. As soon as it is determined that a quorum is present, a permanent moderator is to be elected. This may be done by ballot, and must be so done if any member demands it, but a ballot need not be insisted upon if there is no desire for it.

The moderator. The first duty of the permanent moderator is to lead the council in prayer, and while the moderator may call upon some other member to offer it, it is usual and desirable that he himself shall lead in this opening prayer.

The next duty of the moderator is to call for the election of a permanent clerk. If the duties of the moderator or clerk are likely to be prolonged or arduous, the council may elect an assistant to either or both.

The next duty of the moderator is to call for the records relating to the call of the council. These are to be submitted by the clerk of the church, or by some officer representing the body or bodies calling the council. They should show distinctly the business named in the letter missive and the

authority to submit that business to the present council.

The council being now assured of its own membership and jurisdiction, the moderator will call for the particular business for which the council has convened, hearing from the inviting bodies through the records, documents, and personal statements, until the matter which the council is to determine is fully set before it. This should proceed in logical order, and the council may vote as each part of its investigation is completed, "that the papers and statements thus far be deemed satisfactory." Such a vote, however, does not determine the future action of the council. It is merely a vote to proceed to the next point. The business of the council being fully before it, it is customary to vote that the examination be arrested at this point, and that the council go into executive session.

It is not in good form for members of the council to assume to express the judgment of the council prior to this point, nor is it orderly that the roll be called for individual expression before the council is in executive session. The purpose of the public session of the council is to get all the facts before the body in the most prompt and orderly manner possible, that these may be considered in private by the members of the council.

The moderator of the council can greatly facilitate the work of the body if he has this simple outline clearly in mind.

The clerk. It will greatly facilitate the work of the clerk if, in the preparation of writing materials for his use, a list of the churches and individuals invited be made out in advance on sheets of the same size as those to be used in the records, and with convenient spaces for the writing in of the names of pastors and delegates. Where this is done the clerk will have no difficulty in keeping his records complete. Where this has not been done he should be furnished an assistant, who will make up the roll while he enters the complete record of the business as it is transacted.

There is an erroneous impression that it is a difficult thing for a clerk to make his records complete as they are in progress. On the contrary, if he will insist that all extended motions be reduced to writing, and will procure at the outset a correct and legible roll, he will find no difficulty in presenting his minutes in good form at the time when they are called for. The clerk should not be a member of any committee.

The time for the reading and approval of the records is at the end of the executive session of the council. The records should be so complete that at this time they can be approved, the order of public service added, and only the business incident to the adjournment left to be recorded.

The executive session of the council. When the council is in executive session a motion should be made bringing before it for action the business of

the council. It is customary at this time to call the roll and to permit each member in voting to express briefly his reason for his vote. This is not a time for set speeches, but it is the opportunity of the members of the council freely to express their judgment of the matter which has brought them together.

The council having determined what it will do, it is customary to appoint a committee to formulate its finding. If it is a council of ordination, the duty of the committee will be to confer with the candidate and representatives of the church and report an order for the public service. If it is to advise in a matter of difficulty, the duty of the committee will be to draft suitable resolutions in harmony with the vote that has just been passed.

While this committee is out the council should listen to the reading of its minutes. The report of the committee, which may be expected by the time the records are read and approved, will complete the minutes to this point, and the council may take recess until the public service, if one is to follow, or may complete its work and dissolve.

The dissolving of a council. A Baptist council does not commonly adjourn; it takes a recess from one session to another, and at the close of its business it dissolves. It is not orderly for a council to adjourn and wait to see whether its advice is followed, unless provision for such further proceeding is contained in the letter missive. A council in a

case, which publicly concluded its work, but secretly agreed that if its advice was not followed it would convene again and deal with the matter, was disorderly.

The authority of a council. Strictly speaking, the council's finding has only so much authority as the reason of it. Yet the result of a council being accepted by the parties calling it, or agreeing beforehand to abide by it, has both ecclesiastical and legal value. The courts have more than once decided that in matters which a council is competent to determine and which it has been agreed shall be submitted to it, and which it has passed upon, its decisions will be accepted as to facts.

In the case of a minister who did not wish to resign, and whose church was attempting to force him out without good reason, the decision of a Mutual Council that the action of the church was unjustified would be a legal justification on the pastor's part for claiming his salary. A minister has very little protection in the matter of the tenure of his office, and the decision of such a council, as has repeatedly been shown, would have great weight with the court. Indeed, if the council were conceded to be regular and acting within its jurisdiction, the court would claim no right to reverse the decision of the council, or to do otherwise than protect the minister in the matter of his salary.

As regards ecclesiastical authority, it is, of course, universally conceded that the council is only ad-

visory. But our churches have come so to realize the great value of the decision of a Mutual Council that in practice its findings have the weight of a court of arbitration.

Ex-parte councils. One class of councils, and that happily a class somewhat infrequent, requires a special note.

The right to call an Ex-parte Council exists only when every other means of effecting a reconciliation or securing redress for a grievance has failed, and when a Mutual Council has been definitely refused.

An Ex-parte Council between a church and one of its members may only be called when the church has damaged the relations of the aggrieved member to other churches. If the injury complained of is a purely local one, whose results lie within the local church, a council cannot properly be called, and must refuse to act. Other churches can only be consulted where the relations of a member to other churches are concerned. Thus a member may not call an Ex-parte Council in a case where he has been privately censured by the church, but where his membership remains intact, but may call a council where a letter has been refused him and where he has been refused a hearing before a Mutual Council.

There have been cases where a minority of a church has felt so strongly that the course of the majority was injurious, that it has called an Ex-

parte Council, and the council, composed of prominent men has consented to sit. Such a recourse should, however, be extremely rare.

The same principle applies to a church calling an Ex-parte Council in case of an alleged grievance at the hands of an Association or Convention. The council can only act in cases where the damage is carried beyond the body alleged to have done the injury.

An Ex-parte Council, as soon as organized, must offer its services as a Mutual Council, and its findings can have no weight whatever unless its records show that it exhausted every reasonable effort to induce both parties to join in the council.

May a council increase its membership? The common answer is in the negative. Churches electing delegates to a council have a right to know with what other churches they are to join, but an exception must be made in cases where an Ex-parte Council is offering its services as a Mutual Council. If the other party is willing to accept the offer on condition that certain churches of its or his choosing be added to the council, and the other party will accept these additional members, the Ex-parte Council, in resolving itself into a Mutual Council, is fully justified in making such additions to its membership as will enable it to secure the consent of all parties concerned.

Individuals in a council. The custom is increasingly prevalent of inviting a considerable group of

individual members in addition to the churches composing the council. This practice has been discouraged, yet it is a custom not wholly without reason. But the number of individuals ought not to be so large as in any wise to defeat the nature of the council as a body representative of the churches. If this principle is kept in mind no harm or abuse can follow the practice of inviting individual members; nor need it be insisted that these members be honorary members merely and not entitled to vote. But in case of a serious division of opinion in the council affecting the welfare of the churches themselves, the representatives of the churches would have the right to insist upon the obligation which rests upon them as such.

Evidence. The question is often raised, what evidence a council may consider. What has been said regarding testimony at church trials is applicable here. The council has no power such as a court possesses to summon witnesses and place them under oath. It must be permitted to gather its evidence from a considerably wider range than would be permissible in a court. "Common fame" must be recognized as having evidential value in a council. A notorious scandal with plain implications undenied cannot be disregarded for lack of absolute legal proof. The council must use the judgment of Christian charity, but it need not consider itself bound by such evidence only as courts would regard.

The question is also raised whether parties to a council may be represented by lawyers or by other special advocates. They have that right. A minister whose standing is in question may call to his assistance either a brother pastor or a legal adviser, and the other party at interest in the matter may be similarly represented; but the questionings and arguments of these advocates must be held to respect the differences between a church council and a court of law, and be in all respects amenable to ecclesiastical custom and to decorum touching such matters.

CHAPTER IX

THE ASSOCIATION

THE *churches in association*. Baptists churches, while self-governing and subject to no ecclesiastical authority in their local affairs, are more than independent units. They meet unitedly in district, State, and national bodies. The development of these bodies, their approach to uniformity of organization, and the increase in the measure of responsibility delegated to them by the churches, constitute one of the most significant facts in recent Baptist history.

Baptist churches are grouped into local or district Associations, bodies which formerly existed solely for fellowship. Originally they were purely voluntary, but it is no longer accurate to describe them by this term. A Baptist church has full liberty to withhold itself from fellowship in an Association and to withdraw from the Association at its pleasure; but a church so outstanding or withdrawn, while Baptist in government, would probably not be reported in the records of the denomination as a Baptist church. It, therefore, is no longer strictly accurate to speak of the Association as a voluntary body.

Incorporation. A further step in the development of the power of the district Association is found in the fact that some Associations have obtained legal incorporation with the right to hold property in the name of the churches represented in them. This is an example likely to be followed quite generally, and will give the churches through their local Associations direct control of local and city missionary operations and such other administrative work as the churches may care to undertake.

The organization of the Association. Any group of churches may organize an Association. The territory represented in the Association should be contiguous and so bounded as to cover the entire district. A church situated on the boundary between two Associations may elect which one it will join, and may, on its own request, be dismissed from one Association to unite with another. No higher body has any right to define the bounds of Associations, or to declare what churches shall have membership in any Association. In general, all the churches of a common district should be represented in the same Association. There is no authority to compel this arrangement, however, and there have been frequent exceptions to the rule. In case the German, Scandinavian, or Negro churches of a district desire organization in a body by themselves, they have the right to effect such an organization, even though its boundaries overlap those of Associations of other churches.

Relations of the Association. The Association, being composed of churches in near neighborhood, is naturally a first bond of fellowship and united effort. Shall the Associations be the constituent parts of the State Conventions, or must that body be composed of delegates direct from the churches? Emphasis upon local independency has resulted in the latter procedure. At the same time the reports of the churches are given by Associations in the State annual, and missionary work is carried on with definite reference to associational lines. As long as the State Convention is a body simply for denominational efficiency, and in no sense legislative or judicial, its composition of delegates from Associations could not be harmful.

The Northern Baptist Convention deliberately struck out of its by-laws a provision for representation from Associations, but retained that from State Conventions. This was a very significant action, and may lead to further modification in the membership of the Convention.

The relation of the Association to City Mission Societies in districts where the city is almost co-terminous with the limits of the Association has not yet been satisfactorily worked out. There is possibility that the City Mission Society may become the effective body, the Association thus losing much of its significance.

CHAPTER X

THE METROPOLITAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE great needs of evangelization in the larger cities of the country have called for organization for the purpose of directing missionary work. City Mission Societies have thus existed for a long time in most of our large cities. In the more important metropolitan centers there are often as many missionary churches as are under the charge of a Western State Convention. These City Mission Societies were formed purely for the practical conduct of missionary work. There was no thought of their being representative of the churches in anything but this practical sense. Indeed, such societies are often merely a Board of directors. They are held to discharge their functions sufficiently if they have an effective control of the development of the Baptist mission churches in the city.

The need of metropolitan organization. But our large metropolitan centers are coming to realize that the many denominational interests at stake are very important. The whole city needs to be studied. The progress and movement of self-supporting churches must be understood. The character and needs of foreign populations must be carefully con-

sidered. The evangelization of a large city is, therefore, a very complicated undertaking. In addition to that there are numerous philanthropic enterprises under the denominational name which ought to have some supervision of the churches. It has been customary for small bodies of enthusiastic people to establish, whenever they thought it desirable, philanthropies to which they would attach the name of Baptist, and on the strength of that name appeal to the denomination for support. Such philanthropies readily fall into three classes—the good, the bad, and the indifferent.

It is clear that a City Mission Society as such would have nothing to do with these benevolent organizations or with the work of the denomination as a whole. It has become, therefore, increasingly evident that there should be a delegated body with large powers of supervision and administration. These powers could not in any wise be exercised over the churches. They would not include the right to make expression on matters of doctrine, nor take action in cases of discipline. The independency of every church would be unimpaired. But the churches as a whole ought to be able to express themselves upon matters of general interest in the city, upon questions of denominational policy, and they ought to have a means of massing their forces for forward movement in all directions.

The relation of the metropolitan organisation to the Association. Shall this executive organization

be the Association? The difficulty is that the Association covers generally a larger territory than the city. Furthermore, the Association is traditionally so different a body from this needed metropolitan executive organization that there is a serious question whether it can be, or ought to be, adapted to this new need. It is possible that it can be so. Just as the city of London has become a county with the same county government that obtains in the rest of the kingdom, so a large city might be an Association. It is more likely, however, that the City Mission Society will develop its charter and its functions. This has perhaps been more definitely done in the city of Chicago than elsewhere in the country. The Baptist Executive Council of Chicago includes regularly appointed delegates from the churches in the Chicago Association. It is, however, quite distinct from the Association. The by-laws of this organization may indicate the trend in our metropolitan Baptist polity.

BY-LAWS *of the* BAPTIST EXECUTIVE COUNCIL *of* CHICAGO

Adopted September 25, 1908

ARTICLE I

The name of this organization shall be "Baptist Executive Council of Chicago," and its principal place of business shall be in the city of Chicago, county of Cook, and State of Illinois.

ARTICLE II

The objects for which the Council is formed are to organize, establish, maintain, promote, and preserve, and to aid in organizing, establishing, maintaining, promoting, and preserving Baptist churches and missions, and educational, benevolent, and charitable institutions in the city of Chicago and vicinity; and to take, purchase, hold, and dispose of real and personal estate for religious, missionary, educational, benevolent, and charitable purposes. Provided that the Council shall have no power to levy assessments upon the churches represented therein, and shall have no power to control or interfere with, or have original or appellate jurisdiction of the government, discipline, or other spiritual or temporal affairs of any individual church represented in the Council, without the consent of such church by a majority vote of the members present at a special business meeting of such church regularly called for that purpose.

ARTICLE III

The members of this Council shall consist of the pastor of each of the Baptist churches now forming the Chicago Baptist Association, and of such other churches from time to time as may be approved by the Council, and in addition thereto, one lay member where the membership of such church does not exceed two hundred (200), two members where the membership is more than two hundred (200), and less than five hundred (500), and one additional member for each additional five hundred (500) of membership or fraction thereof; and in addition thereto one representative from each of the recognized Baptist institutions and organizations in the city of Chicago and vicinity. There shall also be elected at each annual meeting of the Council fifteen other persons, who shall constitute members at large of this Council. The

member or members from each church, except the members at large, shall be chosen by such church before the annual meeting of the Council and the names of all such duly certified to the Secretary of the Council before such annual meeting, and in case of failure on the part of any such church either to choose such member or members, or to certify the name or names of the same to the secretary of the Council before such annual meeting, the member or members from such church may be elected by a majority vote of the members of the Council at such annual meeting. The members of the Council shall serve one year and until their successors are duly elected and qualified, and all vacancies in the membership shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV

The general management of all the affairs of the Council shall be vested in the board of fifty (50) directors, all of whom shall be members of the Council and elected for one year by ballot and a majority vote.

ARTICLE V

The officers of this Council shall be a President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer, each of whom shall be elected from the Board of Directors by ballot by a majority vote at the first meeting of the Board of Directors after the annual meeting of the Council. They shall hold their office for the term of one year, or until their successors are duly elected and qualified. The Board shall also appoint its own attorney to take charge of all legal matters pertaining to the Council.

ARTICLE VI

The regular meeting of the Council shall be held on the last Friday in September of each year. Special meetings

of the Council may be held at any time upon the call of the President, or three directors, or upon written request of ten members of the Council. Notice of the annual meeting of the Council, stating the date, place, and hour of meeting shall be duly mailed by the Secretary to the address of each member of the Council at least ten days before such annual meeting, and like notice of special meetings stating the business to be transacted shall be mailed at least three days before such special meetings. Notice for the annual meetings of the Council shall be accompanied by blank forms of proxy for the use of members not able to attend the meeting so called, and at any annual or special meeting of the Council any member may take part and vote either in person or by proxy. Thirty members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any annual or special meeting of the Council. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held each month at such time and place as the Board of Directors shall from time to time determine. At all meetings of the Council the Council shall have all the powers and functions of the Board.

ARTICLE VII

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and Board of Directors; supervise the affairs of said Council, and execute all deeds, contracts, and other documents authorized by the Board of Directors; appoint all special committees, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, and perform such other duties as the Board of Directors may from time to time direct. In the absence of the President or in case of his inability to act, the Vice-president shall perform the duties of the President.

ARTICLE VIII

The Secretary shall keep in a book to be prepared for the purpose a full and complete record of all meetings

of the Council and Board of Directors, and give notice of all meetings of the Council and Board; he shall have the custody of all the books, papers, documents, and the seal of the Council; when directed and empowered so to do by the Board, he shall sign or attest all contracts, deeds, and documents, and attach the seal of the Council to such as may require it; he shall keep a book in which shall be put down the name and address of each member of the Council, and shall perform such other duties as may be required of him by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX

The Treasurer shall receive all the moneys of the Council, and immediately deposit the same in such bank as the Board of Directors shall from time to time designate, to the credit of the Council; he shall pay out moneys only upon vouchers signed by the President or Vice-president, and not otherwise than by check upon the bank where such voucher is for ten dollars (\$10) or more; he shall keep a full and true account of all moneys of the Council received and paid out in a book belonging to said Council; he shall make a written itemized report to the Board of Directors at each regular meeting of the Board, and at its special meetings when requested so to do, of all moneys received and paid out, and shall make out and submit to the Council at its annual meeting each year a report of all receipts and disbursements during the year, which report shall be first examined and audited by an auditor to be appointed from time to time by the Board. The Treasurer may, in the discretion of the Board, be required to give bonds.

ARTICLE X

The Board of Directors shall hold its regular meetings upon the last Friday in each month, at such time and

place as it may by resolution from time to time designate. Twenty members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Special meetings of the Board may be called at any time by the President or by three members of the Board. Notice of all meetings of the Board, stating date, place, and hour of meeting, shall be given by duly mailing such notice to the address of each director, or delivering the same to him in person at least two days before such meeting; provided, however, that when all the members of the Board are present at any special meeting, however called or whenever held, the action taken at such meeting shall be valid and binding.

ARTICLE XI

Whenever any church or other organization or corporation shall duly convey its property to this Council in furtherance of the purposes for which the Council is incorporated, such church or other organization or corporation shall thereupon and thereby be entitled to elect annually so long as its property shall be under the control of the Council, two representatives to meet with the Board of Directors in an advisory capacity, and to take part in all deliberations of the Board, but without power to vote.

ARTICLE XII

The Board of Directors may appoint from its own members each year such standing committees as it shall deem best.

ARTICLE XIII

This Council shall have and use a common seal, containing in a circle the words, "Baptist Executive Council of Chicago—1908—Seal." Such seal is hereby adopted as its common seal, an impression of which is made in the margin hereof.

ARTICLE XIV

The order of business at all regular meetings of the Council shall be as follows:

1. Prayer.
2. Reading of minutes of previous meeting.
3. Unfinished business.
4. Reports of officers.
5. Reports of committees.
6. New business.
7. Election of officers.
8. Adjournment.

ARTICLE XV

These by-laws may be altered or amended at any regular or special meeting of the Council by a majority vote of the members present. Provided at least three days' prior written notice, stating the date, place, and hour of meeting, and the proposed change or amendment shall be given by mailing such notice to each member of the Council.

CHAPTER XI

THE STATE CONVENTION

OUR most significant metropolitan work is carried on in only a few great centers. The largest part of our mission work is that undertaken by the State Conventions. In the West this is carried on in co-operation with the Home Mission Society, but it is under the direction of the State Convention, and from the standpoint of our Baptist polity the State Convention is the significant body. Indeed, it may be said that the State Convention is one of the great significant organizations of the denomination. In its origin it is practically an extension of the Association. The Association was a voluntary gathering of messengers of the churches from a small district. The General Association, as the State body was usually called, was a similar body on a scale of State extent. But the State Conventions have been growing in importance. Our denominational consciousness has developed in the State Conventions. The efficiency of these bodies has made possible the organization of the larger national body.

A delegated body. The State Conventions are generally composed of messengers or delegates from

the churches and from contributing Associations. They also almost always include in their membership annual and life members constituted on the payment of a certain contribution. They are not, therefore, strictly delegated bodies. The question is under serious consideration in many of the State Conventions whether the definite denominational character of these important bodies should not require a more strict limitation to the delegated membership. It is too early to say what will be the outcome of this discussion.

Representative of the denomination. The State Conventions have long ceased to be merely voluntary missionary organizations for the assistance of weak churches. There are in every State important denominational institutions, educational and philanthropic. These are generally organized by the voluntary efforts of individuals, but they take the denominational name, and appeal on the ground of loyalty for denominational support. The churches should have some supervision of such bodies. The natural agency for investigation and supervision is the State Convention. To a larger and larger extent our State Conventions are assuming the right to speak for the denomination within the State. There has in no case been, and it may safely be said there never will be, any disposition to interfere in matters that belong to the individual churches as such. There has been, and to a larger extent will be, a willingness to meet the reasonable demand

of the churches that their delegates shall represent them effectively in speaking their mind upon important matters of denominational, social, and political concern.

Conservator of denominational interests. The State Convention thus becomes the conservator of denominational interests. It has long exercised that function toward many worthy educational interests. There are colleges and academies in many of our States which owe their present healthful existence to the efforts of the State Convention. Our growing denominational consciousness will fortify the Conventions in exercising this conserving influence over all institutions that are worthy of support, as also in discouraging those institutions which ought not to continue.

Relation to the Northern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention includes in its membership messengers from Associations, but not from Conventions. The Northern Baptist Convention decided upon the opposite course. The trend in our polity is very clearly seen. The church, the Association, the State Convention, the national Convention are the grades through which we shall carry on our work. The church will always be absolutely independent. These other organizations will be advisory and executive, but their largest effectiveness requires that they should have this relation toward each other. We say this seems to be the trend. The relation, however, between the State Conven-

tions and the Northern Baptist Convention has not yet been worked out. Some of the ablest men in the State and national work are giving the matter their most serious attention. There is very much more involved than the mere question whether delegates shall be appointed by the one body to the other. The unification of denominational work within the State is the important matter. At present it is possible for half a dozen missionary organizations to be carrying on work within a given State, nobody having any right of supervision over the whole enterprise.

The State superintendent of missions. An official who is coming to have increasing significance is the State superintendent of missions. Formerly he had simply in charge the supervision of the missionary churches. He is now coming into relation with all denominational interests. As the State Convention is becoming representative of the churches in their larger concern with all denominational enterprises and institutions, the superintendent needs to be a man of statesmanship and of large executive power. He will not be a diocesan bishop, but he will be the executive of the State Board; and his good advice to the Board, to the missionary churches, and to denominational interests will always be his greatest value.

The pastor-at-large. A new officer, first appointed by the South Dakota State Convention, is the pastor-at-large. His work is not altogether un-

like that of the district missionary, yet it is more distinctly pastoral. He becomes the acting pastor of the pastorless mission churches. The State Convention feels that it has a right to exercise this oversight, though, of course, it is always done with the consent of the churches. The small churches often lose in a few months all that was gained in years. They are also peculiarly liable to be victimized by unworthy ministers, whom they are unable to detect. The pastor-at-large, taking charge immediately upon the removal of the pastor, secures the church from retrogression, and guides in the selection of a worthy man to take up the work.

CHAPTER XII

THE NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

THE three great Baptist Societies have been accustomed for many years to hold their annual meetings at the same place and at the same general time. These gatherings, commonly called "The Anniversaries," or "The May Meetings," afforded a certain opportunity of denominational self-expression. Yet such expression was of necessity inadequate. A general resolution had to be presented to the three different bodies before it could have any denominational status. The meetings were those of independent societies. There was no meeting of the Baptists as a body.

The organization of the Convention. The Southern churches had a far more effective organization in the Southern Baptist Convention. And a growing feeling developed in the North for a somewhat similar organization. For several years joint committees struggled with the problem, and there was wide discussion. Some felt afraid that the independency of the churches might be endangered. But the desire for effectiveness prevailed, and at Washington, D. C., in 1907, the "Northern Baptist Convention" was tentatively established. Com-

plete organization was finally effected at Chicago in 1910.

There still remain some details of procedure to work out, but the denomination has now a definite organization, and has practical denominational control of all its missionary and publication activities. The basis of representation is clearly unsatisfactory, and is only workable because so large a number of the churches do not send delegates. The Law Committee reported upon this matter as follows:

The proposed amendments to the by-laws of the Convention, offered at the last annual meeting and referred to the committee, have been duly considered and so far as they have been approved they are incorporated in the preceding by-laws. The by-laws relating to membership in the Convention are substantially the provisions in its constitution. They provide for a membership too large for any deliberative assembly. If one delegate from one-half of the Baptist churches authorized to send delegates should attend a meeting of the Convention, there would be a gathering of over five thousand. However inspiring such a gathering of Baptist men and women might be, it would not be practicable to make it a deliberative body, or one to which, because of its numbers, could be safely committed the discussion and settlement of the many serious questions that it will be the duty of the Convention to decide. If the attendance at the meetings of the Convention shall increase so that it shall be much in excess of the numbers that have attended, the necessity will arise for an amendment of these by-laws which will change the units of representation.

This will doubtless be worked out gradually as occasion shall require.

The Convention is so insistent that there shall be no violation of essential Baptist polity that, in proceeding to incorporation, it reaffirmed the declaration made at Washington, D. C., in 1907, as follows:

DECLARATION

The Northern Baptist Convention declares its belief in the independence of the local church, and in the purely advisory nature of all denominational organizations composed of representatives of churches. It believes also that in view of the growth of the Baptist denomination and its extension throughout our country there is need for an organization to serve the common interests of the entire denomination as State and district organizations serve their respective constituencies.

The act of incorporation. Incorporation was effected in the State of New York, June 8, 1910, by a special act, which, very appropriately, was signed by Gov. Charles E. Hughes, who was the first president of the Convention.

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE NORTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

SECTION 1. All persons who now are or who hereafter may become members of the organization called the Northern Baptist Convention, formed in the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, in the year 1907, are hereby constituted a body corporate with the name "Northern Baptist Convention," and under that name shall have perpetual succession, and shall have the right to purchase

or to acquire by gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise, and to sell, convey, or otherwise dispose of any real or personal property.

SECTION 2. The objects of the corporation shall be to give expression to the opinions of its constituency upon moral, religious, and denominational matters, and to promote denominational unity and efficiency in efforts for the evangelization of the world.

SECTION 3. The corporation at any time it shall determine so to do, may elect or appoint such officers and may adopt such by-laws or regulations in relation to its organization, to the management, disposition, and sale of its real or personal property, to the duties and powers of its officers, and to the management and conduct of its corporate business and affairs as it shall think proper, provided such by-laws or regulations are not inconsistent with the laws of the United States or of this State.

SECTION 4. Meetings of the corporation may be held at such time or times and at such place or places in the United States as the corporation may determine from time to time.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. The Convention shall be composed of accredited delegates appointed as follows:

(a) Any Baptist church in the United States may appoint one delegate, and one additional delegate for every one hundred members.

(b) Any Baptist State Convention may appoint ten delegates, and one additional delegate for every ten District Associations included in it, above the first ten.

SECTION 2. Accredited officers and members of Boards of Managers of co-operating organizations shall be delegates *ex officiis*.

The accredited officers and members of the Boards of Managers of the Women's Missionary Societies auxiliary to or co-operating with the American Baptist Home Mission Society or the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society shall be delegates *ex officiis*.

ARTICLE II

OFFICERS

SECTION 1. The officers shall be a President, a First Vice-president, a Second Vice-president, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, and a Treasurer.

SECTION 2. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Convention and of the Executive Committee, and shall exercise a general supervision over the affairs of the Convention.

SECTION 3. In the case of the absence of the President or his inability to serve, his duties shall be performed by the Vice-president in attendance who is first in numerical order.

SECTION 4. The Corresponding Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the Convention, shall send notices to the members of the Executive Committee of the times and places of its meetings, shall inform the chairman of each committee of the names of its members and of the purpose for which it was appointed, and shall perform such duties as the Executive Committee may direct.

SECTION 5. The Recording Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Convention in a book provided for that purpose.

SECTION 6. The Treasurer shall receive all moneys belonging to the Convention, keep an accurate account thereof, and of the sources from which they were derived, pay them out on the direction of the Convention or of the

Executive Committee, and at each annual meeting make a written financial report.

SECTION 7. Each officer shall serve from the close of the meeting of the Convention at which he is elected to the close of the next annual meeting, and until his successor is elected.

SECTION 8. Any member of a Baptist church in the United States is eligible to any office or to serve on any committee, except where otherwise provided.

ARTICLE III

MEETINGS

SECTION 1. The Convention shall meet annually on the third Wednesday in May, unless for some special reason some other time shall be fixed by the Executive Committee in conference with the Boards of Managers of the co-operating organizations.

ARTICLE IV

COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. (a) There shall be an Executive Committee composed of the officers and former Presidents of the Convention and thirty others, of whom at least fifteen shall be laymen. Of the thirty first elected, ten shall serve for three years, ten for two years, and ten for one year; and thereafter there shall be elected annually ten to serve for three years. Vacancies caused by death, resignation, or refusal to act of any of the thirty may be filled by the remaining members of the Committee.

(b) It shall be the duty of this Committee to make arrangements for the meetings of the Convention; to report to it annually in writing, and to care for its interests between the meetings.

(c) No appeals for money shall be made and no collections shall be taken at the meetings of the Convention which have not been approved by the Executive Committee.

SECTION 2. (a) There shall be a Finance Committee of nine, a majority of whom shall be laymen. Of the nine persons first appointed, three shall serve for three years, three for two years, and three for one year; and thereafter there shall be appointed annually three to serve for a term of three years.

(b) It shall be the duty of this Committee to prepare and present to the Convention at each annual meeting a budget based on the budgets submitted by the Executive Committee and by the co-operating organizations.

(c) In case of an emergency arising between the annual meetings of the Convention, the Committee, by the majority vote of all its members, may approve the incurring of indebtedness by a co-operating organization. Should such approval be given, the Committee shall report its action with the reasons therefor to the Convention at its next annual meeting.

SECTION 3. (a) There shall be an Apportionment Committee appointed at each annual meeting. It shall be composed of a member of the Executive Committee and a representative of each of the other organizations, for the maintenance of whose work provision is directly made in the budget.

(b) It shall be the duty of this Committee:

1. To divide among the States represented in the Convention the respective amounts to be raised as specified in the budget approved by the Convention, and to communicate to the Apportionment Committee of each State the amount apportioned to it;

2. To appoint an Apportionment Committee for any State where no such Committee is appointed;

3. To employ such agents and methods and to take such other action to carry the apportionment into effect as to it may seem wise;

4. To report in writing at each annual meeting of the Convention;

5. To divide ratably among the beneficiaries of the budget the expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of the Committee.

SECTION 4. There shall be a Committee on Reports, to serve from the adjournment of each annual meeting of the Convention until the adjournment of its next annual meeting. All reports of co-operating organizations shall be submitted to the Committee as early as practicable before the next meeting of the Convention, at which the Committee shall present its report in writing.

SECTION 5. There shall be a Committee on Enrolment consisting of five persons. To this Committee shall be presented the credentials of delegates to the Convention, and the Committee shall prepare from these credentials and shall report to the Convention a roll of delegates.

SECTION 6. There shall be a Committee on Order of Business, which shall report each day to the Convention a proposed order of business for the next day.

SECTION 7. There shall be a Committee on Nominations of officers and for vacancies in the Executive Committee.

SECTION 8. There shall be a Committee on Selection of a Place for the Next Annual Meeting, which shall report before the adjournment of the last session of the Convention at which the Committee is appointed.

SECTION 9. The Committees on Enrolment, on Order of Business, on Nominations, and on Selection of a Place for the Next Annual Meeting shall be elected at the first session of each annual meeting.

SECTION 10. The Committees on Order of Business, on Nominations, on Selection of a Place for the next Annual Meeting, and on Reports shall be composed of one of the delegates from each State, to be nominated by such delegates and elected by the Convention. A vacancy in any one of these committees shall be filled by the delegates from the unrepresented State.

SECTION 11. The President shall appoint all committees and shall fill any vacancy in any committee except when otherwise provided.

SECTION 12. The word "State" means any State, Territory, district, or dependency of the United States.

ARTICLE V

CO-OPERATING ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 1. On its application and the approval of the Convention by a two-thirds vote, any general denominational missionary, educational, or philanthropic organization, whose constituency resides in the States represented in the Convention, may become a co-operating organization.

SECTION 2. A co-operating organization must agree:

(a) To insert in its by-laws a provision that all accredited delegates to each annual meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention shall be annual members of the organization;

(b) To regulate its expenditures in accordance with a budget to be annually approved by the Convention;

(c) To solicit funds only on the approval of the Convention, or on the approval of the Finance Committee, given between the annual meetings of the Convention as provided by Article IV, Section 2, Subdivision (c);

(d) To incur no indebtedness without the previous approval of the Convention, or of the Finance Committee, as provided by Article IV, Section 2, Subdivision (c);

(e) To submit its books and accounts to the inspection of the Finance Committee; to prepare its budgets and to make its financial reports in such form as that Committee shall request.

SECTION 3. The Convention, through its Executive and Finance Committees, will aid in raising funds needed to carry on the work of each co-operating organization.

SECTION 4. Co-operation between the Convention and a co-operating organization shall be terminated on the expiration of a year after written notice of a desire to terminate co-operation shall have been given by one to the other.

ARTICLE VI

AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended at any annual meeting of the Convention, either on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, given at a previous session of the Convention at which such amendment is submitted, or after written notice of the proposed amendment, given at a previous annual meeting and signed by at least twenty-five delegates, representing not less than five States.

The American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the American Baptist Publication Society, and the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society have all adopted these by-laws, with slight modifications to suit their respective conditions, and have thus become co-operating societies of the Convention. The Women's Foreign Societies are auxiliary to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, and so naturally did not enter the co-operative relationship.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

THE Baptists of the Southern States organized at Augusta, Ga., in 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention. It has been from the beginning an effective organization for controlling the missionary and publication activities of the denomination in that section. The independence and equal rights of the churches have been most jealously guarded. The basis of membership differs markedly from that of the Northern Baptist Convention. There is no delegation from the churches, but individuals become members on the basis of a money payment. There is one representative from each co-operating district Association, a plan which the Northern Convention distinctly refused to adopt. Nevertheless, the Southern Baptist Convention has always been a most vigorous and efficient expression of the denomination in the Southern States.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

This body shall be styled the "Southern Baptist Convention."

ARTICLE II

It shall be the design of the Convention to promote foreign and domestic missions, and other important objects

connected with the Redeemer's kingdom, and to combine for this purpose such portions of the Baptist denomination in the United States as may desire a general organization for Christian benevolence, which shall fully respect the independence and equal rights of the churches.

ARTICLE III

The Convention shall consist, (1) of brethren who contribute funds, or are delegated by Baptist bodies contributing funds for the regular work of the Convention, on the basis of one delegate for every two hundred and fifty dollars actually paid into the treasuries of the Boards during the fiscal year ending the thirtieth day of April next preceding the meeting of the Convention; (2) of one representative from each of the District Associations which co-operate with this Convention, provided that such representative be formally elected at the annual meeting of his District Association, and his election certified to the Secretaries of the Convention, either in writing or by copy of the printed minutes.

ARTICLE IV

The officers of this Convention shall be a President, four Vice-presidents, a Treasurer, an Auditor, who shall, in event of the death or disability of the Treasurer, act as such officer, and two Secretaries, who shall be elected at each annual meeting, and hold their offices until a new election; and the officers of the Convention shall be, each by virtue of his office, members of the several Boards.

ARTICLE V

The Convention shall elect at each annual meeting as many Boards of Managers as, in its judgment, will be necessary for carrying out the benevolent objects it may determine to promote—all of which Boards may continue in office until a new election. Each Board shall consist

of a President, Vice-president, Secretaries, Treasurer, Auditor, and fifteen other members, seven of whom, including one or more of the officers, shall form a quorum for the transaction of business; provided, that any of the Boards may have the same person to fill the two positions of Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. To each Board shall be committed, during the recess of the Convention, the entire management of all the affairs relating to the objects with whose interests it shall be charged; all of which management shall be in strict accordance with the constitutional provisions adopted by this Convention, and such other instructions as may be given from time to time. Each Board shall have power to make such compensation to its Secretaries and Treasurer as it may think right, fill the vacancies occurring in its own bodies, and enact its own by-laws.

ARTICLE VI

The Treasurer of each Board shall faithfully account for all moneys received by him, keep a regular entry of all receipts and disbursements, and make report of them to the Convention whenever it shall be in session, and to his Board as often as required. He shall also, on entering upon the duties of his office, give competent security to the President of the Board for all the stocks and funds committed to his care. His books shall be open at all times to the inspection of any member of the Convention and of its Board. No moneys shall be paid out of any of the treasuries of the Board but by an order from that Board from whose treasury the money is to be drawn, which order shall be signed by the presiding officer.

ARTICLE VII

The Corresponding Secretaries of the several Boards shall maintain intercourse by letter with such individuals or public bodies as the interest of their respective bodies

may require. Copies of all such communications, with their answers, if any, shall be kept by them on file.

ARTICLE VIII

The Recording Secretaries of the several Boards shall keep a fair record of their proceedings, and of such other documents as may be committed to them for the purpose.

ARTICLE IX

All the officers, Boards, missionaries, and agents appointed by the Convention, or by any of its Boards, shall be members of some regular church in union with the churches composing this Convention.

ARTICLE X

Missionaries appointed by any of the Boards of this Convention must, previous to their appointment, furnish evidence of genuine piety, fervent zeal in their Master's cause, and talents which fit them for the service for which they offer themselves.

ARTICLE XI

The bodies and individuals composing this Convention shall have the right to specify the object or objects to which their contributions shall be applied. But when no such specification is made, the Convention will make the appropriation at its own discretion.

ARTICLE XII

The Convention shall hold its meetings annually, but extra meetings may be called by the President, with the approbation of any of the Boards of Managers. A majority of the attending delegates shall not be necessary to make a quorum for the transaction of business. The President, or in the event of his death, any of the Vice-presidents, of the Convention, may, at the request of two of its Boards,

change the time and the place of meeting of this Convention, when it may be deemed by him inexpedient to convene at the time or place appointed.

ARTICLE XIII

Any alterations which experience shall dictate may be made in these articles by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting of the Convention.

THE BY-LAWS *of the* CONVENTION

Impressed with the obligations resting on the Convention to endeavor more energetically and systematically to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort for the promulgation of the gospel, we adopt the following by-laws:

1. That the Boards of the Convention be directed to form the closest possible connection with the State Boards, where such exist, in such a way as shall be mutually agreeable, and in other cases to secure such agency as each of the Boards may deem best, in both cases providing for the necessary expenses incurred.

2. That the Secretaries of the Boards of the Convention be instructed to secure frequent distribution of information relating to their work by means of newspapers, tracts, leaflets, and otherwise, as may be found expedient among the mass of the people.

3. That the Committee on the Nomination of New Boards be instructed to nominate, as Vice-presidents of Boards, men known to be identified with the interests of the Convention, and of their own State Boards, and unless special reasons exist to the contrary, men who make efforts to attend the sessions of the Convention. These Vice-presidents shall be expected to co-operate with the Boards, both giving and receiving suggestions as to

work to be done, and they also shall be expected to present at the next session of the Convention a brief report in writing of what they have been requested to do, and of the way in which they have complied with these requests, with any suggestions they may have to offer as to the conditions and needs of their respective fields. It shall be the duty of each Secretary in due time to furnish the Vice-presidents of his Board with suitable blanks for such reports, and to call their attention to this article, and to make any proper effort to secure the due preparation of these reports. In case any Vice-president appointed is unable or unwilling to comply with the requests herein mentioned, it shall be the duty of the Board, if possible, to find some person who can, and request him to do so; and, furthermore, the Vice-president for each State shall be desired, as speedily as possible, to prepare a roll of the Associations, churches, and Sunday-schools in that State, to be used for the distribution of information, and to ascertain as far as possible which of the churches and Sunday-schools are contributing to the funds of the Board and the annual amounts, and to make systematic effort each year to increase the number and amount of such contributions.

4. The Boards shall report at each session of the Convention what special efforts they have been able to make toward carrying out the objects of these by-laws.

5. Immediately after the reading of the reports of the Boards each year, a committee of five shall be appointed, to whom shall be referred so much of these reports as pertains to the carrying out of the by-laws, and also the reports of the Vice-presidents.

6. The President, Vice-presidents, and Secretaries of the Convention shall be elected by ballot; provided, however, that when there is only one nomination for the same office, the Secretary, if there be no objection, may be instructed to cast the ballot for the Convention.

7. Applause on the floor of the Convention is out of order, and it shall be the duty of the presiding officer to promptly suppress all such demonstration.

8. Speeches advocating the claims of any brother nominated for an office of the Convention shall be limited to one speech of nomination, and one speech seconding the nomination; also, addresses and responses of welcome shall be limited to one address of not more than fifteen minutes in length, and one response of not more than ten minutes.

9. These by-laws may be altered at any time by a majority vote, except on the last day of the Convention.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE BAPTISTS OF NORTH AMERICA

THERE is only one Baptist denomination in the United States. There are two Conventions, Northern and Southern. But this in no sense implies two denominations. The constitution of each of those Conventions permits membership from any part of the United States. The division is purely one of missionary administration. It had, of course, a historic origin, and continues for convenience. But there has never been wanting a sense of solidarity. A minister leaving a church in the North to accept a pastorate in the South would no more be regarded as changing denominational relations than if he went from the East to the West.

Yet there has been no recognized organization in which the entire denomination was represented. The Baptist Young People's Union of America prepared the way for such an organization, and growing sentiment in the North and South favored it.

There were mutual approaches on the part of leaders in the two sections. The meeting of the two Conventions in 1905 in the neighboring cities of Kansas City, Mo., and St. Louis, Mo., afforded

the opportunity for the united organization. There was, therefore, formed at St. Louis at the close of the two conventions the General Convention of the Baptists of North America. It is noteworthy that in the name of this organization North America is used rather than the United States. In truth, there is only one Baptist denomination on the entire continent. The Canadian churches are not in any sense alien to us. The provisions of membership in the constitution clearly contemplate the inclusion of representatives from Canada and from any other country of North America.

The Hon. E. W. Stephens, then the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, became the first president of the General Convention. An inspiring session was held, with fraternal speeches from Northern and Southern speakers. It was felt that a definite step forward had been taken in bringing the two sections together.

The General Convention is not intended to be very much more than an expression of denominational solidarity, but as such it fills a good place. It is likely that it will have an enlarging significance.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME AND TERRITORY

The name of this organization shall be the General Convention of Baptists of North America. It shall include the continent of North America and its islands.

ARTICLE II

OBJECTS

The objects of this Convention shall be to promote closer fellowship among American Baptists, their increased efficiency and spirituality and the evangelistic spirit in our churches; to consider subjects having a bearing upon the missionary, educational, and philanthropic enterprises of the denomination and upon the moral and spiritual welfare of society.

ARTICLE III

LIMITATIONS

This Convention shall exercise no authority other than that which the weight of its opinions may carry, nor shall it interfere with the churches or with the missionary or educational agencies of the denomination.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

This Convention shall be composed of representatives duly appointed as follows:

SECTION 1. Each church may appoint one representative, and one additional representative for every one hundred members or fraction thereof above the first one hundred.

SECTION 2. Each local or district Association may appoint two representatives, and one additional representative for every ten churches or fraction thereof above the first ten.

SECTION 3. Each territorial, provincial, and State Convention (or general Association) may appoint ten representatives, and one additional representative for every ten thousand members above the first fifty thousand.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

SECTION 1. The officers of this Convention shall be a President, three Vice-presidents, a Corresponding Secre-

tary, a Recording Secretary, an assistant Recording Secretary, and a Treasurer, who together with fifteen others shall constitute an Executive Committee, any member of a Baptist church in the territory of the Convention being eligible to office.

SECTION 2. The officers shall serve from the close of the Convention during which they are elected to the close of the next Convention, or until their successors are elected.

ARTICLE VI

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any regular session of the Convention, notice thereof having been given in writing by any five members at a previous session, or proposed by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee of the General Convention.

BY-LAWS

1. The Convention shall meet in 1906, and thereafter every three years; the exact time and place to be determined by the Executive Committee. Special meetings of the Convention may be called upon petition of two hundred members of Baptist churches, whose residences shall be in at least ten States or Provinces, and upon approval of the petition by the majority of the Executive Committee.

2. No appeals for money shall be made nor collections be taken which have not been approved by the Executive Committee.

3. On the first day of each triennial session of the Convention the Executive Committee shall report the enrolment of representatives present, and the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of one from each State, Territory, and Province represented, and this Nominating Committee shall subsequently present the names

to be voted upon as officers of the Convention, and also the names of fifteen others, who shall, with the officers, constitute the Executive Committee.

4. At a time to be determined by the Executive Committee a collection for the expenses of the Convention shall be taken.

5. The Executive Committee shall make arrangements for each meeting of the Convention and submit a report to the Convention, which report shall include the report of the Treasurer.

6. These by-laws may be altered or amended at any meeting of the Convention, provided notice of the proposed alteration or amendment has been made in writing on the first day of the Convention, and signed by at least ten delegates.

CHAPTER XV

THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

THE Baptists have been a scattered people. We have had no commanding bishops, who could be assembled by the summons of a Metropolitan from all the nation and from all the world. The splendid sense of unity presented by an ecumenical council seemed to belong only to the churches governed by hierarchies. Our fathers were content to lose the advantage of such dignified manifestation to the world, secure in the value of their New Testament polity.

But democracies have their imposing unity as well as oligarchies—more imposing in a sense because of their voluntary and representative character. At the beginning of the present century there began to be a general demand on both sides of the Atlantic that there should be a representative gathering of the Baptists of the world. The untiring efforts of a few leaders in England and America at last brought it to pass. The Baptist World Congress was held in London, July 11-19, 1905. The venerable Dr. Alexander McLaren presided at the Congress, and representatives from almost every part of the globe were present. As a result of the meeting there was formed the Baptist World Alliance.

CONSTITUTION *of the* BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

PREAMBLE

Whereas, in the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness, in the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, of the churches of the Baptist order and faith throughout the world and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and co-operation among them, while recognizing the independence of each particular church and not assuming the functions of any existing organization, it is agreed to form a Baptist Alliance, extending over every part of the world.

ARTICLE I

DESIGNATION

This Alliance shall be known as "The Baptist World Alliance."

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

Any general Union, Convention, or Association of Baptist churches shall be eligible for membership in the Alliance.

ARTICLE III

OFFICERS

The officers of the Alliance shall be a President, a Vice-president from each country represented in the Alliance, a Treasurer, a British Secretary, and an American Secretary.

ARTICLE IV

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Treasurer, Secretaries, and twenty-one other members, all

of whom, together with the officers, shall be elected at each general meeting of the Alliance, and enter upon office at the close of such meeting.

Of the twenty-one elected members: Five shall be from Great Britain, seven shall be from the United States of America, two shall be from Canada, and the remaining seven shall be from the rest of the world.

Five members shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Executive, but absent members shall have the right of voting by proxy, through any other member of the Executive who shall produce a written authorization. A majority of those voting in person or by proxy shall be sufficient for the transaction of business. Three months' notice shall be given to every member of the Executive of all business to be brought before the next meeting, which is other than routine business. The President shall appoint at a general meeting of the Alliance a committee of nine members to submit the names of the officers and of the Executive Committee for the approval of the general meeting.

ARTICLE V

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

At a date not later than one year preceding a general meeting of the Alliance, the Executive Committee shall have authority to appoint an Advisory Committee of not more than three hundred members of the Alliance, to confer with the Executive Committee on any matter pertaining to the objects of the Alliance. The Executive shall, however, have power to appoint an Advisory Committee not exceeding three hundred members at such other times as it may consider necessary.

ARTICLE VI

POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive Committee shall have the power of filling up vacancies which may occur among the officers and

the Executive when the assembly is not in session. It shall be the first business of the Executive Committee, after its appointment, and the forming of this Alliance, to frame the by-laws for the administration of business.

ARTICLE VII

GENERAL MEETING

The Alliance shall meet in general assembly ordinarily once in five years, unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee, the specific date and place to be determined by the Executive Committee, which shall have power to make all necessary arrangements therefor.

ARTICLE VIII

REPRESENTATION FOR GENERAL MEETING

Each constituent body of the Alliance may appoint messengers to the general meeting from its own resident members on a basis to be determined by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENT

No change shall be made in this Constitution except by a two-thirds majority at a general meeting of the Alliance after at least two days' notice of the proposed action, such vote not to be taken on the last day of the meeting.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

BAPTISTS have always held that their polity and doctrine is essentially that of the New Testament. They have sometimes very logically taken the ground that only a religious body organized upon New Testament principles and preserving the New Testament ordinances in their primitive form could properly be regarded as a church. Consequently they have declined to give letters of regular dismissal to their members seeking affiliation with other denominations, they have refused to receive such letters of dismissal from other denominations, and they have felt unable to recognize the propriety of uniting in many union efforts.

The relation of Baptists to other churches. It is becoming increasingly evident, however, that a thorough denominational loyalty is consistent with a very large interdenominational fraternity. To-day it is the practice of Baptist churches generally to regard all other evangelical bodies as churches of Jesus Christ. The church is understood to be the invisible body of all disciples of the Lord, while the churches are organized groups of such disciples.

Union efforts of many kinds are, therefore, freely undertaken.

The Baptists have not been great advocates of church union. Believing in the value and New Testament character of their own principles, they have confidently expected them to be increasingly accepted. But they have not looked to a union of the whole church under their banner, nor have they desired to make compromises for the sake of organic unity.

The Baptist position may be said to be that of a free acceptance of the denominational situation, with a complete willingness to co-operate in all interdenominational endeavor. This attitude is evident in the long interdenominational comity in the work of foreign missions, and more recently in home and city missions. A noteworthy example also is in the acceptance of membership in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

The Baptist delegation to the Federal Council in presenting its report to the Northern Baptist Convention at Portland, declared its hearty approval of the democratic organization of the Council, and added, "On this democratic basis the Baptist churches can heartily join in standing with the great Christian bodies of our country in matters of common interest that concern Christians of every name and demand their united and concerted action, if the church is to lead effectively in the conquest of the world for Christ."

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. This body is the most significant manifestation of the church universal that our day affords. It is organized on a plan recommended by the Inter-Church Conference of 1905, under a constitution adopted at Philadelphia in 1908. The following churches are represented at present, and others may be admitted by two-thirds vote: The Baptist churches of the United States, the Free Baptist General Conference, the National Baptist Convention (African), the Christians (the Christian Connection), the Congregational Churches, the Congregational Methodist Churches, the Disciples of Christ, the Evangelical Association, the Evangelical Synod of North America, the Friends, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, General Synod, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), the Primitive Methodist Church, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America, the Methodist Protestant Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America, the Moravian Church, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the United Presbyterian Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Reformed Church in America, the Reformed Church

of the United States of America, the Reformed Episcopal Church, the Seventh Day Baptist churches, the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod, the United Brethren in Christ, the United Evangelical Church.

The officers of the Federal Council are a president, one vice-president from each denomination, a recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, a treasurer, and an executive.

The management is in the hands of the Executive Committee, consisting of the above officers, and one representative from each denomination; and in case of the larger denominations an additional representative for each five hundred thousand communicants or major fraction thereof. All ex-presidents are members of this committee.

This Executive Committee has power to represent the Federal Council in the promotion of the following objects:

I. To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian Church.

II. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.

III. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches.

IV. To secure a larger combined influence of the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.

V. To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities.

This Federal Council shall have no authority over the constituent bodies adhering to it; but its province shall be limited to the expression of its counsel and the recommending of a course of action in matters of common interest to the churches, local councils, and individual Christians.

It has no authority to draw up a common creed or form of government or of worship, or in any way to limit the full autonomy of the Christian bodies adhering to it.

The Federal Council does its work through committees of not less than twenty-five members each. The following are provided for in the by-laws:

1. A Committee on Foreign Missions, to which are referred all matters relating to the administration of missions in the foreign field.

2. A Committee on Home Missions, to which are referred all matters relating to the evangelization of our own country.

3. A Committee on Literature and Education, to which are referred all matters concerning publications, educational institutions and plans, and Sunday-school work.

4. A Committee on Finance, which prepares the budget for the Council and performs such other duties as may be assigned to it.

5. A Committee on Social Service to co-operate with similar church organizations, in the study of social conditions, and to secure a more natural relationship between working men and the church.

6. A Committee on Family Life, to which are referred all matters relating to marriage and divorce and the development of family life.

7. A Committee on Sunday Observance, to which are referred all matters relating to a better observance of the Lord's Day.

8. A Committee on Temperance, to which are referred all matters relating to the suppression of the drink traffic.

Members of these committees, not elected members of the Executive Committee, become corresponding members of the Executive Committee, and enjoy all of the privileges of that committee, except that of voting.

The Federal Council meets once in four years, beginning with 1908, on the first Wednesday in December, at eight p. m. Members of this Council are appointed as follows:

Each of the Christian bodies adhering to this Federal Council shall be entitled to four members, and shall be further entitled to one member for every fifty thousand of its communicants or major fraction thereof.

Under this rule the Northern Baptist delegation has been twenty-four. The delegation is divided as nearly as may be between clerical and lay delegates, and is appointed by the Northern Baptist Convention.

In meetings of the Council voting is by general vote unless otherwise demanded.

But in case one-third of the members present and voting request it, the vote shall be by the bodies represented, the members of each body voting separately; and action shall require the vote, not only of a majority of the members voting, but also of the bodies represented.

It is the plan of the Federal Council that there shall be State Federations upon the same general plan; and some progress has been made in this direction.

Part II

A Compendium of Forms

For the Use of Churches
and Councils

BAPTIST STATEMENTS *of* DOCTRINE

BAPTISTS have no authoritative creed. It is within the competence of any church to make its own statement of doctrine or to organize without a definite statement of doctrine at all. It has been usual, however, to express the common agreement of the churches by the adoption of some widely accepted creed. At the same time it has always been understood that such a creed was open to revision at any time. Two statements have had the widest circulation among us. The Philadelphia Confession, adopted by the Philadelphia Association in 1742, was practically the old creed of the English Baptists. The New Hampshire "Declaration of Faith" was adopted by the New Hampshire Baptist State Convention in 1833, and has been most generally adopted by the churches.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE ARTICLES OF FAITH

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end

of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

2. THE TRUE GOD

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

3. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression he fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

4. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe the Scriptures teach that *election* is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his

free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

5. THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who, according to the will of the Father, assumed our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.

6. OF REGENERATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that *regeneration*, or the new birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the dominion of sin broken, and the affections changed from a love of sin and self to a love of holiness and God; the change is instantaneous, effected solely by the power of God, in a manner incomprehensible to reason; the evidence of it is found in a changed disposition of mind, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. And without it salvation is impossible.

7. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is

justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

8. THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and finally perish, but will endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

9. THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

We believe the Scriptures teach that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfil its precepts arises entirely from their sinful nature; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

10. A GOSPEL CHURCH

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in

them by his word; that its only scriptural officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

II. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper.

12. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of the church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord; showing their faith and participation in the merits of his sacrifice, and their hope of eternal life through his resurrection from the dead; its observance to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

13. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by abstaining from all secular labor, except works of mercy and necessity, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

14. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order

of human society, and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and the Prince of the kings of the earth. But that civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with, religious matters.

15. RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are, in his sight, wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in this life and after death.

16. THE WORLD TO COME

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless sorrow, and the righteous to endless joy; and this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell on principles of righteousness.

This Confession was largely the work of Dr. J. Newton Brown, who subsequently enlarged it by the addition of articles on repentance and faith and sanctification. It was further modified and enlarged by Doctor Hiscox in the "New Directory for Baptist Churches." It will ever remain as a significant monument in our history.¹

¹ A covenant was also adopted. It has in the course of years been slightly modified. The form as now generally used is given on page 133.

A CONFESSION OF FAITH IN SCRIPTURAL LANGUAGE

There is a growing feeling among us that a Confession of Faith ought to be in scriptural rather than in theological language. The passages of Scripture employed in connection with the various articles in the New Hampshire Declaration might well, with some modification, be arranged into such a Confession.

I. We believe in one God, revealed to us as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

II. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

III. We believe that man was made in the image of God, but that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

IV. We believe that God willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; and that Jesus Christ came that we might have life, and that we might have it abundantly.

V. We believe that if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

VI. We believe that by grace we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

VII. We believe that the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

VIII. We believe that we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

IX. We believe that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with

all our mind, and with all our strength, and our neighbors as ourselves.

X. We believe that they who received the word at the first were immersed, and that the members of Christ's church should be buried with him by immersion into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

XI. We believe that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread and the cup and gave to his disciples; and that as often as we eat the bread and drink the cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he come.

XII. We believe that we should make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Jesus commanded us.

XIII. We believe that righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

XIV. We believe that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, and that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.

THE CONSTITUTION *of* a CHURCH

I. NAME

This church shall be called the
Baptist Church of

II. COVENANT¹

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to educate religiously our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and

¹ The covenant may be adopted as part of the constitution or as a separate instrument. This form is that most widely used. It has been modified somewhat from the New Hampshire form.

use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

III. CHARACTER

SECTION 1. *Polity.* Its government is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation which are common among Baptist churches.

SECTION 2. *Doctrine.* It receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. *Qualifications.* Its membership consists of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Saviour and Lord, and who, (1) after due examination by the church as to their Christian experience, and, if coming from other churches, as to their letters of dismission and recommendations or satisfactory substitutes therefor, (2) have been accepted by vote of the church and, having been baptized, (3) enter into its covenant.

SECTION 2. *Duties.* Members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all the spiritual duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend habitually the services

of this church, to give regularly for its support and its charities, and to share in its organized work.

SECTION 3. *Rights.* Such members as are in full and regular standing, and do not hold letters of dismission and recommendation, and have attained the age of twenty-one years, and such only, may act and vote in the transactions of the church.

SECTION 4. *Termination.* The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usages of the Baptist churches, and especially as follows:

(1) Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of dismission and recommendation to any other Baptist church is entitled to receive it upon his written request. In case of removal to another community he should promptly make such request. This letter shall be valid as a recommendation for only one year from its date, unless renewed, and this restriction shall be stated in the letter.

(2) If a member desires to join a religious body with which this church is not in fellowship, the church may, at his request, give him a certificate of his good standing and terminate his membership.

(3) If a member in good standing requests to be released from his covenant obligations to this church for reasons which the church may finally deem satisfactory, after it shall have patiently and kindly endeavored to secure his continuance in its fellowship, such request may be granted and his membership terminated.

(4) The church may also, after due notice and hearing and kindly effort to make such action unnecessary, terminate the membership of persons for the space of two years non-resident, or for the same space of time not habitually worshiping with the church, or for the same space of time not contributing to its support according to the system prescribed by the church or in some way satisfactory thereto.

(5) Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, the church may terminate his membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

(6) The membership of no person shall be terminated (except by letter) at the meeting when the recommendation for such action is made.

(7) All requests for termination of membership or action looking thereto shall first be considered by the deacons, who shall make recommendations to the church.

SECTION 5. *Restoration.* Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored by vote of the church, if for any offense, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation, or, if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

V. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. The officers and committees shall be as follows:

(1) A Pastor, to be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall have been given. The election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary to a choice.

(2) A Clerk, to be chosen at each annual meeting, to serve for one year or until another shall be chosen and qualified.

(3) Six Deacons, two of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for three years.¹

¹ In organizing a church the deacons should be elected to serve for one, two, three, or more years, respectively, according to the number of deacons. This section may be suitably altered to meet the preference of any church

(4) A Treasurer, to be chosen at each annual meeting to serve for one year or until another shall be chosen in his stead.

(5) A Superintendent of the Sunday-school, to be chosen at each annual meeting.¹

(6) A Finance Committee, which shall consist of the Treasurer of the church (*ex officio*) and not to exceed four other persons to be nominated by the advisory committee, one of whom shall be a deacon and one a trustee. The names of this committee shall be submitted to the church for approval within two weeks after the annual meeting. If not approved, other names may be submitted at any subsequent meeting.

This committee shall devise and put into operation ways and means for raising the necessary funds for the support of the church. It shall also supervise the disbursement of the funds as appropriated by the church, and shall make such reports to the advisory committee and to the church as may be requested by either or both of them.

(7) A Board of Trustees, one-third of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting to serve for three years, and until their successors shall be appointed, to hold in trust the property of the church.² They shall have the actual care of the place of worship, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer, any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

in regard to term of office. The fraction of a year up to the next annual meeting should be regarded as a full year. In accordance with the practice of some churches, the following may be added by special vote if the church so desires: "No person shall be eligible to reelection as deacon, after serving a full term as such, until after an interval of one year." In the case of small churches a less number than six deacons may be chosen. Larger churches often have many more. Election for a term of years is of course optional. Many churches will continue to prefer to elect for life.

¹ If, as in many cases is the custom, the school chooses its own superintendent, the church should ratify the choice in order to make it valid.

² As to the election of these officers the church should carefully consider the laws of the State in which it is situated.

(8) All officers and committees named in the above sections shall be elected by ballot, and all elections, except that of Pastor, shall be determined by a majority of the votes cast by the members present who are qualified to vote.

(9) The Advisory Committee. The designated officers of the church, together with the Finance Committee, two representatives nominated by the women's organization and one representative nominated by the young people's society shall constitute an Advisory Committee, of which seven shall constitute a quorum.

It shall be the duty of this committee to submit to the church recommendations on such matters as may be referred to it by the church. It may also make recommendations to the church of its own motion, provided, however, that action on any recommendation on a subject not referred to it shall be postponed to a later meeting on the request of any member, sustained by a vote of one-fourth of the members present. Any new business presented to the church shall be referred to the Advisory Committee if requested by any member of the church sustained by one-fourth of the members present. This committee may have general charge of the church music, and also act as a pulpit committee in recommending a new Pastor when necessary.

Meetings of the committee may be called at any time by the Pastor, Treasurer, chairman of the Board of Trustees, or any three members, provided that public notice of such meeting be given, or one day's personal notice to each member of the committee in the city.

(10) The Nominating Committee. A Nominating Committee, consisting of six persons, shall be appointed at the last weekly prayer meeting in, or as soon thereafter as practicable. This committee shall be chosen by ballot without previous nomination—the six names receiving the highest number of votes to be declared elected. On the Sunday succeeding the appointment of this committee, a Nominating Committee, consisting of three per-

sons, shall be chosen in the same way by the officers and teachers of the Sunday-school, to act in conjunction with the Nominating Committee of the church in reporting nominees for officers of the Sunday-school. No person eligible for reelection shall be a member of the Nominating Committee. This committee shall adopt such methods as may to it seem proper to obtain from the different members of this church a general expression as to their preferences for persons to fill the various offices, such expression being intended to aid the committee in making its report.

At the weekly prayer meeting in the second week before the annual meeting in, the Nominating Committee of the church shall report one nomination for each of the offices, the terms of which are expiring, or in which for any reason a vacancy exists, except that the nominations for the offices in the Sunday-school shall be reported by the joint action of the Nominating Committee of the church and school. One week later other nominations may be made. The Clerk shall then print the nominations and distribute them to the church.

In case any person nominated by the committee shall refuse to serve, the matter shall be referred to the Nominating Committee for further action and report. One week after its report other nominations may be made, and the election shall then take place.

(II) The church may also choose a Music Committee and such other committees as it may deem advisable.

SECTION 2. The Pastor shall have in charge the spiritual welfare of the congregation; he shall preach the word, and have in his care the stated services of public worship, and shall administer the ordinances. He shall preside at all meetings of the church, except as limited in Article VII, Sec. 2 (4), relating to business meetings.

SECTION 3. The Clerk shall keep a complete record of the transactions at all business meetings of the church, which shall be read for approval at the next following special

business meeting. He shall keep a register of the names of members, with dates of admission and dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms. He shall also notify all officers, members of committees, and delegates of their election or appointment. He shall issue letters of dismissal and recommendation voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these by-laws.

SECTION 4. The Deacons shall provide for the Lord's Supper and aid in its administration, and shall care for the poor, calling upon the Treasurer by vote as a Board, at their discretion, for any funds in his possession held for these purposes.

They shall examine and recommend candidates for admission to the church, shall provide for the supply of the pulpit in any vacation of the Pastor, shall decide on objects for regular or special collections when the church has not acted thereon, shall have regard to discipline as provided in the article relating to that subject, and shall be watchful for the spiritual interests of the church. They shall make a written report at each annual meeting of the matters under their charge.

SECTION 5. The Treasurer shall keep separate accounts as follows:

(1) Of all moneys contributed at the Lord's Supper, which shall be primarily devoted to the relief of the poor, and which contributions, together with all other moneys given for that purpose, he shall hold subject to the orders of the Deacons. (2) Of all moneys raised for the objects of Christian benevolence, to be paid by him to the several persons or societies entitled thereto. (3) Of all moneys received by him for the support of public worship or of any department of church work, to be paid out on the order of the church or of any persons or committees authorized by the church therefor.

All the Treasurer's accounts shall be kept distinct from all other accounts, and all deposits made, and all checks drawn by him shall be in the name of the church.

He shall make an annual written report in detail of his receipts and expenditures, properly audited by some person previously appointed by the church.

SECTION 6. The Superintendent of the Sunday-school shall have the general oversight and direction of the school, and shall conduct its affairs upon such general plans and in such methods as may be approved by the Advisory Committee.

He shall, at the annual meeting of the church, present a written report of the work of the school during the year, with such recommendations as he may deem wise.

VI. ORGANIZATIONS

The church regards as integral parts of itself all organizations formed for the purposes of ministration and which use the facilities of the church property. Of all such organizations the Pastor shall have general oversight, and the church will expect a report from each at its annual meeting.

VII. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. *For Worship.* (1) Public services shall be held statedly on the Lord's Day and on some regular evening or evenings of each week.

(2) The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday morning of each month, or at such other time as the church may determine. The midweek meeting next preceding shall be the covenant meeting.

(3) Occasional religious meetings may be appointed by the Pastor at his discretion, or by vote of the church.

SECTION 2. *For Business.* (1) At any of the regular meetings for worship the church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon the dis-

missal of members to other churches, and upon the appointment of delegates to councils, but not upon other business.

(2) The Pastor may, and shall, when requested by the Deacons, Trustees, or a standing committee, call from the pulpit special business meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice.

Special meetings of the church shall also be called by the Clerk upon the written application of any five adult members specifying the object thereof, which notice shall be read at the public service on the Lord's Day next preceding the day fixed for such meeting. No special meeting shall be held on the same day on which the notice is given.

(3) The annual meeting of the church shall be held on at which time the annual reports shall be presented and officers elected, and such other business transacted as may be specified in the call or authorized in the by-laws. This meeting shall be called by the Clerk in the manner specified in the paragraph next preceding.

(4) At all meetings for business called by the Clerk, a chairman shall be chosen by vote of the church; but at all other meetings the Pastor shall preside, except that in his absence, or when the business relates to himself, the church shall elect a chairman.

(5) At the annual and all special meetings . . . members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

VIII. DISCIPLINE

SECTION 1. Should any unhappy differences arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

SECTION 2. Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal, occur, the Deacons shall endeavor to

remove the offense; and if such effort fail, shall report the case to the church.

SECTION 3. If the church vote to entertain a complaint, which must be made in writing, it shall appoint a reasonable time and place of hearing and notify the person in question thereof, furnishing him with a copy of the charges.

SECTION 4. At such hearing, the accused member may call to his aid any member of the church as counsel. If he shall not present himself at the time appointed, or give satisfactory reasons for his neglect so to do, the church may proceed in his absence.

SECTION 5. All such proceedings should be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

SECTION 6. In case of grave difficulty the church will be ready, if requested, to ask advice of a mutual council.

IX. CORPORATE SEAL

This church shall become (or being) legally incorporated under the laws of the State of adopts as its corporate seal, a scroll or circle containing the words, "The Baptist Church of, Organized19...., Incorporated 19...." And the following motto and device The same to be written, stamped, or printed.

X. AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any annual meeting of the church, or at a meeting specially called for that purpose, the proposed amendment being inserted

in the call; but no change shall be made in Articles II and III, entitled "Covenant" and "Character," except at an annual meeting, and by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the church entitled to vote, said proposed change having been laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day next succeeding such proposal.

FORMS *of* LETTERS MISSIVE

FROM INDIVIDUALS DESIRING HELP IN ORGANIZING
A CHURCH

To the Baptist Church,
in, GREETING:

After careful deliberation, and after seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have come to regard it as our duty and privilege to associate together as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ in this place, and have taken the steps preparatory thereto. We therefore affectionately request you to send your pastor and two delegates to an ecclesiastical council, to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to meet in our place of worship on
....., the day of,
at o'clock m., which shall review our proceedings, and consider the need and opportunity for the proposed church; and if the result of such examination be favorable, assist in completing the organization, and extend to it the fellowship of the Baptist churches.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

.....
.....
.....

*Committee for the Brethren.*¹

.....
(Date and place.)

¹ When the names of the members of a committee are not in their own handwriting, all copies of the letters missive should be authenticated by the actual signature of the clerk.

The following named churches (and persons) are invited:

(Names.)

.....

Clerk, pro tem.

FOR THE RECEPTION OF A CHURCH INTO FELLOWSHIP

The Church in

*To the Baptist Church,
in, GREETING:*

This church, organized as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon Baptist principles, earnestly desires the enjoyment of the fellowship of the Baptist churches and participation in common work for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. We therefore affectionately request you to send your pastor and two delegates to an ecclesiastical council, to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to meet in our place of worship on, the day of, 19...., at o'clock m., which shall make the necessary examinations into our polity, faith, and practice, and if the result be favorable, extend to us the fellowship of the Baptist churches.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

.....

.....

.....

Committee of the Church.

.....

(Date and place.)

The churches (and persons) invited are as follows:

(Names.)

In accordance with the vote of the church.

.....

Church Clerk.

FOR THE ORDINATION OF A MINISTER

The *Baptist Church,*
in

To the *Baptist Church,*
in, GREETING:

Whereas, Brother A. B., a member of this church, believing that the Lord has called him to the ministry of the word, desires ordination in view of special work now before him, namely,¹ and trusts that he has obtained the preparation of mind and heart necessary to qualify him for its sacred duties, we therefore affectionately request you to send your pastor and two delegates to an ecclesiastical council, to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to meet in our place of worship on, the day of, 19...., at o'clockm., which shall review our proceedings and make the necessary examination, and if the result be favorable, proceed with us to his ordination and extend to him the fellowship of the Baptist ministers and churches.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

.....
.....
.....

Committee of the Church.

.....

(Date and place.)

The churches (and persons) invited are as follows:

(Names.)

In accordance with the vote of the church.

.....

Church Clerk.

¹ The work should be specified, such as "pastoral service," "foreign missionary work," "home missionary work," "as an evangelist," etc.

FOR ADVICE IN SPECIAL CASES

The *Baptist Church,*
in

To the *Baptist Church,*
in, GREETING:

Whereas this church is in circumstances which make it needful that it should obtain wise and godly advice from neighboring churches whose judgment, it may be hoped, will be guided by the Holy Spirit, we therefore affectionately request you to send your pastor and two delegates to an ecclesiastical council, to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to meet in our place of worship on, the day of 19...., at o'clock m., which shall consider the facts and questions then to be laid before it, and which shall give to us such fraternal advice as it may deem important with reference to the work committed to our hands.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

.....

Committee of the Church.

.....

(Date and place.)

The churches (and persons) invited are as follows:

(Names.)

In accordance with the vote of the church.

.....

Church Clerk.

FOR ADVICE IN CASE OF INTERNAL DISSENSIONS

The Baptist Church,
in

To the Baptist Church,
in, GREETING:

Whereas, the peace of this church is disturbed by internal differences between brethren, which are injurious to its prosperity and the cause of Christ; and whereas, in such cases it is the privilege of any church to ask for wise and godly counsel from neighboring churches with the hope of thereby removing the causes of disturbance and securing harmony; and whereas, brethren who differ in their present judgment agree to this reference, we therefore affectionately request you to send your pastor and two delegates to an ecclesiastical council to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to meet in our place of worship on, the day of, 19...., at o'clock m., to which these difficulties within the church will be made known, and which, after due deliberation, shall give to us the counsel to which it shall be divinely led.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

.....
.....
.....

Committee of the Church.

.....

(Date and place.)

The churches (and persons) invited are as follows:

(Names.)

In accordance with the vote of the church.

.....

Church Clerk.

FOR A MUTUAL COUNCIL IN CASE OF ALLEGED GRIEVANCE

The..... Baptist Church, in
To the Baptist Church,
in, GREETING:

Whereas, Brother A. B., who has been deprived of good and regular standing in this church by act of the church, alleges that this action is unjust and improper, and desires that the church will join with him in calling a mutual council to consider his alleged grievance and advise in reference thereto; and whereas the church, desiring only that which is according to the rules of the gospel of Christ, accedes to his request, we therefore affectionately request you to send your pastor and two delegates to an ecclesiastical council, to be constituted (by mutual agreement) as stated below, hereby called to meet in our place of worship on, the day of, 19...., at o'clock m., which shall review all the proceedings in this case, make the necessary examinations, and give such advice as it shall find required by Baptist principles in the spirit of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wishing you grace, mercy, and peace,

.....

Committee of the Church.

.....

(Date and place.)

.....

Complainant.

The churches (and persons) invited are as follows:

(Names.)

In accordance with the vote of the church.

.....

Church Clerk.

FOR AN EX-PARTE COUNCIL TO CONSIDER AN
ALLEGED GRIEVANCE

To the Baptist Church,
in, GREETING:

Whereas, the undersigned has been by the act of the
..... Baptist Church in
deprived of his good and regular standing in that church,
and thereby of his communion with neighboring churches,
which action he holds to have been erroneous both in
method and substance, and an injury to him as a Christian
brother; and whereas, he has requested the church to
join him in calling a mutual council to ask the advice of
neighboring churches in the case, which request the church
has refused to grant, as he thinks, unreasonably; in accord-
ance with the method of relief acknowledged among our
churches, the undersigned affectionately requests you to send
your pastor and two delegates to an *ex-parte* ecclesiastical
council, to be constituted as stated below, hereby called to
meet in on, the day
of, 19...., at o'clock m.,
to which shall be communicated all the facts in the case,
and which will be respectfully asked to give such advice
as shall be warranted, under the guidance of the Holy
Spirit.

Trusting in your willingness to listen and to aid in
securing the removal of any injury, if such should be
found to exist,

Yours in Christian fellowship,

.....

.....

(Date and place.)

The churches (and persons) invited are as follows:

(Names.)

FORMS RELATING *to the* DISMISSION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

APPLICATION FOR UNITING IN THE FORMATION OF A NEW CHURCH

*To the Baptist Church
of*

DEAR BRETHREN :

Being desirous of uniting with other Christian brethren
in the formation of a new Baptist church in,
I hereby respectfully request a letter of dismission and
recommendation for that purpose, to take effect when
such church shall be duly organized.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

(Signed)

....., 19.....

LETTER OF DISMISSION FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW CHURCH

*The Baptist Church
of*

Sends GREETING:

This certifies that, a
member in good and regular standing of this church, is
at own request hereby dismissed and affection-
ately recommended to unite with other Christian brethren
in the organization of a new Baptist church in
..... When membership

in such church shall be completed, membership with this church will cease.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

(Signed)

....., 19..... *Clerk.*

APPLICATION FOR A LETTER OF DISMISSION FROM
ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER

To the Baptist Church of

DEAR BRETHREN:

Being desirous of uniting with the Baptist Church of, I hereby respectfully request a letter of dismission and recommendation to that church.

Yours in Christian fellowship,

(Signed)

....., 19.....

A LETTER OF DISMISSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Baptist Church of

To the Baptist Church of, GREETING:

This certifies that, a member in good and regular standing of this church, is at own request hereby dismissed and affectionately recommended to your fellowship and care, and, when received by you membership with this church will cease.

By vote of the church.

.....

....., 19..... *Clerk.*

NOTE 1. This letter is good, as a recommendation, for one year only from its date.

2. The clerk of the church accepting this letter is requested to fill out the accompanying blank certificate, and return it to the above address as soon as possible.

A CERTIFICATE OF RECEPTION

To the *Baptist Church*
of

This certifies that, recommended
to our Christian fellowship by you, was, on the
day of, 19...., received into the membership
of the Baptist Church of

Attest,

.....

Clerk.

....., 19....

FORM OF MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE

To be given to members desiring to unite with other than
a Baptist church, or desiring the termination of member-
ship.

To Mr.

DEAR BROTHER:

This will certify that your name has been upon the
roll of this church since, that
it has continued there until this time as that of a member
in regular standing, and that this certificate is given you at
your own request and your membership in this church
terminated.

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace, we are,

The Baptist Church
of

By

Clerk.

By vote of the Church this

....., 19....

FORMS RELATING TO LICENSE
AND ORDINATION

FORM OF A LICENSE TO PREACH

This is to certify that Brother,
a member of the Baptist Church of
....., in good standing and held by us in
high esteem, believing himself called of God to preach
the gospel, and having given evidence of his godly living
and gift of preaching to the full satisfaction of the
church, is hereby accorded our hearty approval and consent
that he employ his gifts in the preaching of the gospel
as the Lord may open the way. And we pray that the great
Head of the church may give him abundant grace and lead
him into large usefulness.

By vote of the church.

.....
Pastor,
.....
Clerk.

FORM OF CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION

This certifies that our Brother
was publicly ordained and set apart to the work of the
gospel ministry with appropriate religious services, prayer,
and the laying on of hands, according to the usages of
Baptist churches, at,, 19....

That he was called to ordination by the.....
Church, of which he was a member, and which, after full

and sufficient opportunity for judging of his gifts, were agreed in the opinion that he was divinely called to the work of the ministry.

That churches were represented in the council by ministers and laymen, and that, after a full, fair, and deliberate examination, being satisfied on all points, the council did unanimously recommend his ordination.

That our Brother did accordingly receive the full, entire, and hearty approval of the council in his official entrance upon the work of the ministry, administering the ordinances, and otherwise assuming all the functions of a Christian minister. And may the blessing of the great Head of the church attend him, crown his labors with abundant success, and make him an honored instrument of good to Zion and the world.

.....

Moderator.



.....

Clerk.

.....

(Date and place.)

Date Due

			
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